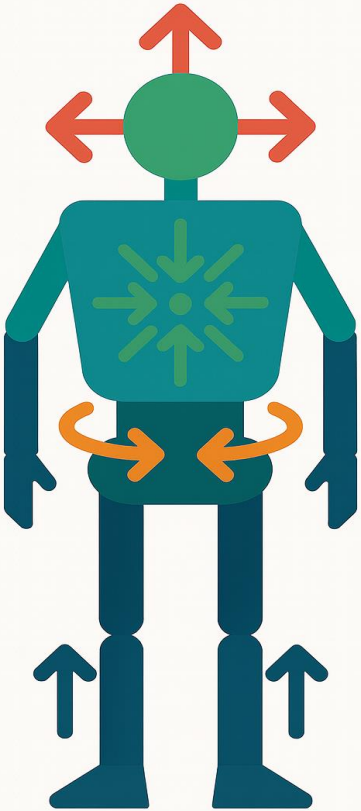
THE CORE

AN INNER GATEWAY TO BODY AND SOUL



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The Core – An Inner Gateway to Body and Soul

From the cry of the newborn to the calm of old age – discovering the center that holds the human being.

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Preface

This book grew from a simple discovery: that the center of the body, hidden deep within, quietly carries the whole of life.

I began to notice how the midsection and diaphragm, when gently gathered, could change not only posture and breathing, but also appetite, calm, and even the state of the heart. What seemed at first a matter of exercise revealed itself as a gate between body and soul.

In time, I looked more closely — at infants learning to cry, roll, and crawl, at children in play, at adults working and sitting, at the elderly guarding their strength. In every stage I found the same truth: the human being is held together by the core.

Science, too, has begun to speak of these things — of diaphragmatic breathing, of

interoception, of the link between midsection and mind. Yet the language of daily life has always known it: “I feel calmer when I breathe deeply,” “I can sit longer when I gather my midsection.” Two languages, one truth.

This book is not a manual of exercise, nor a study of anatomy alone. It is a journey — from birth to old age, from body to soul — showing how the hidden belt of the core stands as the key to wholeness.

I invite you, the reader, to walk this path: to feel, to gather, to steady yourself from within. For in the quiet act of drawing the midsection inward, one discovers not only the strength of the body, but also the peace of the soul.

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Introduction

This book was born from simple, clear observation of the human body and the spirit within it. At every stage of life – in birth and childhood, in youth and maturity, even in old age – one truth comes back again and again: The human being lives around an **inner center** – the deep belt of muscles surrounding the midsection and the diaphragm, known in today's language as the *core*.

Here the body stands and here it sits. Here it breathes, here it digests. Here it gains strength, and here it learns patience. When the core is strong, the body is stable, breathing is calm, digestion is balanced, and desires are moderated. When the core is weak, the body falters, breathing is shallow, digestion is troubled, and the inner drives become restless.

More than that – the core reveals a wondrous place where body and soul meet. Through a quiet act of gathering the midsection inward, a person can actually shift his inner feelings, calm his impulses, and gain a sense of mastery from within. It is a rare and powerful experience: to feel that one is not only a guest in one's body, but its host.

This book invites you on a journey – from the infant lying on its midsection and learning movement, through the child at play, the youth in growth, the adult at work, until the elder seeking balance – to discover how, at every stage of life, the core is the silent foundation that carries the human being.

The Core – a small place, yet within it lies a vast world.

Part I – The Foundation of the Core in the Body

Chapter 1 – The Core as the Power of Contraction and Expansion and as the Center of the Muscles

The core of the human being is not merely a group of inner muscles. It is the very power of contraction. It is the force by which a person draws the entire front of his body inward, as if gathering it into the spinal column. When the chest and abdomen are pulled back, when all outward spread is collected into the middle line, then the person discovers his core strength.

In that state, the spine becomes not only bones and nerves, but an inner pillar that draws the

whole front toward it. The person connects to his inner root, and through it the body as a whole becomes stable. This is the act of contraction – everything is gathered, centered, and becomes a single middle point.

And from this contraction comes expansion. Only one who knows how to gather inward, to join his front into his pillar, can then move outward with real strength. The motions of the arms and legs, the walking, the speaking, the spreading of the body – all come out of that inner contraction. Without it, every expansion outward falls apart and does not last.

Thus the core becomes the life-center of the muscles: it gathers inward, and from that gathering comes the power to expand. There is no true expansion without a prior contraction, and no real contraction that does not lead to expansion.

And here it becomes even clearer: the core – that inner center of the body – is not only a set of muscles, but the pillar on which the whole structure stands. It includes the deep abdominal muscles, the diaphragm, the pelvic floor, and the fine muscles that lie close to the spine. Together they hold the human body from within, like a hidden inner belt.

When a person moves his arm or leg, it seems as if the action is carried out by the local muscles. But in truth, the core always acts first. Every movement begins with a small contraction in the core – even before the arm or the leg starts to move. In this way the body ensures that the central pillar is firm, and only then does it send out the branches of movement. This is a simple law of human structure: there is no motion without prior stability.

The core is also the center of transmission. Every force produced in the legs – a jump, a run, a step – passes through the center of the body before it can reach the arms or move upward. And in reverse, every movement of the arms passes through the center so that balance is not broken. If the core is weak, the energy is wasted and lost along the way, and the body becomes tired and prone to injury.

In this sense one can say that all the muscles depend on the core. It is not that the core sends them direct commands – for the nervous system is what activates each muscle individually – but their functioning depends on the stability of the core. Without it the muscles act as scattered individuals, and with it they become one unified body.

The parable is of a great building standing on a central column. Each floor may be built of different stones, but if the middle pillar is

strong, the whole building stands firm and each stone knows its place. If the pillar cracks, even the strongest stones crumble and fall. So it is with the body: the core is the central pillar, and every muscle draws from it the power to act.

From here comes a clear call: one who wishes to establish his body in firmness, one who wants all his muscles to work in harmony and not each on its own, must strengthen the core. In this way he will uphold not only his movements, but also his breathing, his digestion, and the unity of his soul and body together.

Chapter 2 – Scientific Expressions Concerning the Core

Although this book is written in a simple language to explain the essence of the core, it

is important to hear how scientists speak in their own terms. They do not use the words "contraction and expansion," but rather "stability and mobility." Yet the idea is the same: every movement of the limbs begins with an inner gathering of the core.

Kibler, Press & Sciascia (2006), *The Role of Core Stability in Athletic Function*

"Core stability is seen as being pivotal for efficient biomechanical function. It provides the base for movement of the extremities. The core muscles must contract in anticipation of limb motion to maximize force and minimize joint load."

Hodges & Richardson (1996), *Inefficient Muscle Function in LBP Patients*

"Anticipatory postural adjustments are characterized by pre-programmed contraction

of the transversus abdominis prior to limb movement."

Behm, Drinkwater, Willardson & Cowley (2010), *The Use of Stability Ball Training*

"The core functions to maintain spinal alignment and transmit forces between the upper and lower body. Stability must precede mobility."

Zemková (2022), *Neuromuscular Control of Core Stability*

"Neuromuscular control of the trunk is essential to provide a stable base for functional movements and sport-specific performance."

Martuscello et al. (2013), *Systematic Review of Core Muscle Activity*

"Exercises involving free weights generate greater activation of the trunk stabilizers than

isolated core exercises, supporting the concept of the core as an integrated stabilizer."

All of these statements point to one inner truth: the core comes before every movement. It contracts first to stabilize, and only afterwards allows expansion outward. Science calls this *anticipatory contraction*. In the language of this book we call it the *power of contraction and expansion*. The content is one.

Chapter 3 – Clarifying the Place of the Core – Between the Abdomen and the Spine

When I first began to study the exercises that speak about the core, especially in the programs and writings that are popular today, I became confused on one central point. On the one hand, all the explanations emphasized that

the core is around the spinal column. They spoke about strengthening the fine muscles close to the vertebrae, about keeping the back firm, and in scientific terms they almost always used the phrase *spinal stability*. It seemed clear that the core was entirely focused on the back.

On the other hand, in those same exercises and in other guides, again and again the focus was on the abdomen. The instructions were to strengthen the abdominal wall, to draw the belly inward, to make the inner abdomen firm. Many of the most common exercises directed all their work toward the front of the body. This left a question: is the core in the abdomen, or is it in the spine?

When I thought about it further, it became clear that there is no contradiction here. Both are true. For in truth, the core is not only the front and not only the back, but the connection

between them. The center of the abdomen, the inner point before a person, does not stand on its own. Its power is in being gathered inward and drawn toward the spine. And the stability of the spine is not independent, but only because the front of the body is being collected and joined to it. Thus the abdomen and the spine are not two separate centers, but one reality – the inner contraction in which the front is gathered into the back.

In this way the scientific language becomes clear. All of the researchers wrote of the spine:

– *"Core stability is pivotal… It provides the base for movement of the extremities."* (Kibler, Press & Sciascia, 2006) – describing the spinal base as the foundation of all movement.

– *"Anticipatory postural adjustments… contraction of the transversus abdominis prior*

to limb movement." (Hodges & Richardson, 1996) – speaking of a contraction in the deep abdomen before movement, in order to stabilize the spine.

– *"Stability must precede mobility."* (Behm et al., 2010) – stability of the trunk, especially the spine, comes before motion.

They all spoke about the spine, yet their words describe the same inner process: the abdomen contracts, draws inward, and thereby gives firmness to the spine. Science calls this *anticipatory contraction* – the contraction that comes before all motion. It is exactly the same principle: before the limbs move outward, the front is gathered into the back.

With this the confusion is resolved. Science described it from the side of the spine, while the exercises often described it from the side of the abdomen. In truth both sides are one.

The core is the act of contraction in which the front of the body is gathered and joined to the spine. From this inner gathering comes the balance and stability for every movement, every step, every action.

And from here a new clarity emerges: it is not necessary to choose whether to emphasize the abdomen or the spine, because they are two sides of one thing. In fact, proper core training should bring both together – the inward drawing of the abdomen, and the upright strength of the spine. This is why, when practiced correctly, one feels both the belly tightening inward and the back standing strong. This is the power of the core – to join front and back, and to make from them one central pillar.

Chapter 4 – The Work of the Muscles – Gathering the Flesh to the Bones

There is a simple foundation in the human body: flesh by itself is soft, without firmness. If it were to stand alone, it would collapse and fall apart. What holds the flesh together as one strong frame is the action of the muscles.

Each muscle is attached at its ends to the bones by strong tendons. Whenever a muscle contracts, it shortens and draws its two ends closer. In this way, not only do the bones move and produce motion, but all the flesh around the muscle is gathered inward, pressed, and drawn closer to the skeleton. Thus the constant work of the muscles is to collect the flesh and bind it to the bones.

From this, a deeper point is understood: the front of the body is soft – the chest, the

abdomen, and all that is on the face-side of man. The back of the body – the spine and the strong muscles around it – is hard and firm. If the front were to stand on its own, it would have no power, for it is soft. What gives it strength? The muscles themselves, which gather the softness and press it inward toward the spine. In this way the front receives its firmness from the back.

The muscles, then, are not only movers of the limbs, but connectors. They take the soft parts of the flesh, draw them inward, and secure them upon the skeleton. Through this, the body becomes one whole – softness joined with hardness.

Therefore, the front must always be drawn toward the back. Without this connection it would collapse. Only through the gathering – the muscles pressing flesh to bone, the

abdomen being drawn into the spine – does the front stand strong and balanced.

On the inner level, this teaches about the human being as a whole. The soft parts of the self – the emotions, the sensitivities, the delicacies – must rest upon the backbone, the inner pillar of firmness. Without that backbone they cannot endure, but when the softness is gathered into the strength, a person becomes truly stable.

Chapter 5 – The Tension Between the Feet Pressing Down and the Spine Drawing Up

When a person stands upon the earth or walks forward, his feet press strongly into the ground. This pressing is not only support, but it creates a double action: on the one hand the

feet push forward and downward, and on the other hand the ground returns a force backward and upward. This is the natural order of every step – every force sent into the earth comes back from it. Thus, through pressing down, the power of rising upward is awakened.

At the very same time, the spinal column with all its extensor muscles is stretched backward and upward, pulling the vertebrae and the head so that they do not fall forward. This is the strength of the spine – it holds the body upright and draws it upward, as if it is pulling from behind.

These two forces always act together. The feet press forward and downward, while the spine and the head draw backward and upward. The tension between them gives a person his standing. Without pressing, there would be no power to rise. Without the pull from behind,

one would fall forward. Only through the balance of both comes stability.

This is what science describes in the language of *ground reaction force* – the power returned from the ground – together with the action of the spinal extensors. But in simple inner words: there is no rising without pressing down, and no standing without the tension between forward and backward.

And so it is with the core. The front of the abdomen is gathered inward, drawn toward the spine – this is the act of contraction. From this pressure comes the power to straighten the body, to lift the head, and to rise upward. The front is pressed back, the limbs are pressed down, and from this very gathering the whole stature is raised upward.

Here lies a clear teaching: the core is not one side alone – not the abdomen alone and not the

spine alone – but the tension between them. Just as the feet press down and the head pulls up, so too the abdomen presses inward and the spine stands firm. Out of this union the body becomes upright and strong.

Chapter 6 – The Advantage of Feeling the Body as Two Parts

Fortunate is the person who can feel his body not as one solid block, but as two distinct halves – the upper body and the lower body. The upper half is in his hand, as something he can turn and move, while the lower half stands firm as a separate base. When he twists the chest and shoulders against the pelvis, or when he pushes the abdomen forward while drawing the spine and head back, he discovers a new power. He is no longer moving as a single piece, but as two parts working against each

other, and this tension itself brings strength and stability.

Segmental Control and Dissociation

Science describes this ability with the terms *segmental control* and *dissociation*. Segmental control means the ability to see the body as segments that can move in relation to one another, not only as one piece. Dissociation means the separation of upper and lower body movement. This ability is essential not only in athletic training but also in rehabilitation. When a person cannot dissociate, he moves stiffly, lacks balance, and is more prone to fall. But one who can separate upper from lower has greater control, balance, and strength.

The Core and Rotation

Within the study of the core, this point is explained very directly: one of the primary functions of the core is to allow *rotation* of the

upper body on the lower body. Especially the oblique muscles of the abdomen are designed to make this possible. The chest can turn against the pelvis without losing stability, because the core ties them together. This is exactly what is felt when the upper body can be moved as something distinct, in contrast to the lower body.

Pressing Down and Drawing Up

The benefit of such awareness is that a person can train each part on its own. The lower half presses strongly into the ground, while the upper half is free to twist, to draw back, and to rise. The lower provides firmness and foundation, the upper provides mobility and direction. Between them stands the core, as the place of tension that binds both into one. This is why exercises that alternate between pressing and twisting, between forward and backward, give the greatest stability.

The Experience of Standing, Sitting, and Lying

From personal experience one can notice: when standing, it is harder to separate upper from lower, for both are under the demand of balance. The legs are working to hold the body upright, and so the upper body is more tied into the same effort. When sitting, it becomes easier. The pelvis and legs are fixed on the chair, and the upper body can turn and move more freely. And when lying down, it is easier still. The lower half is entirely supported, and the upper body can be felt as something separate with almost no effort.

Science explains this as well. In standing, *postural control* demands that the nervous system integrates upper and lower together at every moment to prevent falling. In sitting, the base is already stable, so the nervous system allows greater dissociation. And in lying, with

the base fully supported, the dissociation is maximal. This shows clearly how the same body can be felt more or less divided, depending on the position.

The Inner Gain

Thus we see that the advantage of feeling the body in two parts is not imagination, but grounded in real physiology. Segmental control, dissociation, ground reaction forces from the feet, intra-abdominal pressure from the core, spinal extensors pulling upward, and the obliques allowing rotation – all of these together describe exactly what one feels: the lower pressing down and forward, the upper drawing back and upward. The person who can sense this lives in greater harmony with his body, and every exercise becomes more meaningful.

Chapter 7 – The Three Parts of the Body – Stability, Movement, and the Middle

When looking at the human body, one can divide it into three main parts: the lower, the middle, and the upper. Each part carries a different nature, and both science and inner feeling testify to this.

The lower part – the legs, thighs, and pelvis – belongs to stability. Here the large, heavy muscles carry the weight of the whole body. Many of these are called **postural muscles**, because their main task is to hold the posture upright. They are rich in **slow-twitch fibers**, able to work constantly, resistant to fatigue, and built for long endurance. These muscles give a person his foundation of standing.

The upper part – the shoulders, chest, arms, hands, and head – belongs to movement. Here

the muscles are more varied and free, designed for lifting, rotating, and delicate work. Many of them are called **phasic muscles**, because they work in phases – active when needed, at rest when not. They are rich in **fast-twitch fibers**, able to contract quickly, give bursts of power, but tire soon. These are the muscles of movement and change.

The middle part – the abdomen, spine, lower and mid-back – is the **core**, the true middle. It joins stability with movement. Some of its muscles are postural, close to the spine, holding the frame; others are phasic, in the abdominal wall, allowing breath, digestion, twisting, and rotation. The core is thus a true meeting point, carrying both stability and motion together.

From here a full picture is drawn: lower – stability and postural muscles. Upper – movement and phasic muscles. Middle – the

core, combining both. A complete human being is not only standing still and not only moving, but has a foundation, has motion, and has a middle that unites them into one.

Chapter 8 – Exercises Special to the Three Parts

Once it is clear that the body is built of three parts – lower, middle, and upper – we can also see that each part has its own **special exercises**. The body cannot be strengthened by one kind of practice alone. Each part must be trained in its own way.

Lower part – exercises for stability. The lower part is the foundation, the postural base. Its work is to hold the body against gravity. The main exercises are:

– **Squats** – bending and rising on the legs, with or without weight.

– **Lunges** – long steps forward or backward, training the thighs and pelvis.

– **Step-ups** – climbing stairs, simple yet powerful for stability.

– **Deadlifts** – lifting weight from the ground, strengthening the lower back and hips.

All of these build the power of standing firm.

Middle part – exercises for the core. The middle is the core, combining stability and movement. Its exercises gather the midsection inward and teach the body balance:

– **Plank** – holding the body straight, with the abdomen drawn in.

– **Bridge** – lying down and lifting the pelvis upward.

– **Bird-Dog** – on hands and knees, reaching one arm forward and the opposite leg backward.

– **Side Plank** – holding the body on one side in a straight line.

– **Midline Crossing** – touching hand to opposite foot or knee, training the axis of the body.

These exercises unite stability and motion, the very work of the core.

Upper part – exercises for movement. The upper part is the place of phasic action, of strength that comes and goes. Its exercises are:

– **Push-Ups** – pressing from the ground to strengthen chest, shoulders, and arms.

– **Pull-Ups** – lifting the body upward, working the back and arms.

– **Shoulder Press** – pushing weight overhead, training the shoulders.

– **Row** – pulling weight back, strengthening the upper back.

– **Arm Curls** – bending the arms with weight, giving power to the hands. These bring freedom and strength to the moving half of the body.

In sum: the lower body is built by exercises of standing and lifting, the middle by exercises of inward gathering and balance, and the upper by exercises of pressing, pulling, and free movement. Whoever strengthens each part in its place builds a whole body – stability, movement, and the middle that unites them.

Chapter 9 – Breathing: An Upper Movement and Its Effect on the Core and the Lower Body

Breathing seems to be a simple act, the chest rising and falling, but in truth it is the inner link between the three parts of the body – upper, middle, and lower.

Breathing in the Upper Part – Constant Motion

In the upper part, breathing is most visible. Every inhalation lifts the ribs and shoulders, every exhalation lowers them. This is the place of **constant motion** – there is not a moment without breath. The chest and neck muscles, such as the **intercostals** between the ribs and the **sternocleidomastoid** in the neck, are active to create this unceasing movement.

Breathing in the Middle Part – The Diaphragm and the Core

The **diaphragm** is a broad dome-shaped muscle spread between chest and abdomen. It is the key to linking breathing with the **core**. When the diaphragm descends, it presses the abdominal organs and creates **intra-abdominal pressure**. When it rises, the pressure is released and air flows out. Core exercises – such as the **Plank** or the **Bridge** – depend greatly on this breathing. If the abdomen is drawn in and braced as the diaphragm descends, a strong internal stability is built. And in return, the breathing itself is shaped by the exercises, becoming deeper and calmer.

Breathing in the Lower Part – Support and Stability

Although the legs and pelvis do not visibly move with each breath, they carry its effect. As the diaphragm presses downward, the intra-abdominal pressure is transmitted into the pelvis and the **pelvic floor**. In this way the body becomes more firmly **supported** on the lower part. Every deep breath adds support from below, every inhalation strengthens the stance of the legs and pelvis.

Breath Holding – Bracing

When a person lifts a heavy weight or faces strain, he learns to “hold” or “lock” the breath for a moment. Science calls this the **Valsalva maneuver** – keeping air in the lungs with the throat closed, while the diaphragm presses down and the abdomen braces inward. This increases intra-abdominal pressure and forms an internal “safety belt” for the spine. The core stiffens, and the lower body bears the load with greater strength. Breath holding is not

ordinary breathing, but a momentary act that gives the body power to withstand heavy force without collapse.

Summary

Breathing is an upper motion at all times, yet its power descends into the middle through the diaphragm and the core, and adds support to the lower body. Core exercises teach the person to use breathing properly, and in times of strain – even to lock it for a moment, making it an inner brace of steel. Thus the body becomes whole: living motion above, internal stability in the middle, and firm support below.

Chapter 10 – What Are Exercises

When hearing the word exercises, it may seem at first that their purpose is only **movement**.

The body moves, the arms rise and fall, the legs step forward, the heart beats faster, the breath quickens. This is surely an important part, for exercises awaken and strengthen the body's ability to move.

Yet the deeper purpose of exercise is not movement alone, but **stability and posture** upon which movement rests. For every person moves in daily life; what is lacking is not motion, but motion with order, with grounding. Most movements in ordinary life happen without structure, and on a weak base. Exercise comes to train the body first to gather its inner foundation, and only then to bring forth correct and steady movement.

Science describes two main groups of muscles:

– **Postural muscles** – the muscles of stability. Their task is to hold posture, working

constantly, resistant to fatigue. They are rich in **slow-twitch fibers**, slower but strong for long endurance.

– **Phasic muscles** – the muscles of movement. Their task is to act in bursts, giving quick force but tiring quickly. They are rich in **fast-twitch fibers**.

Exercise is not meant to strengthen one group alone, but to train them to **work together**. The postural muscles must be trained to hold the base, and the phasic muscles to move upon that base. Without this cooperation, movement becomes weak and posture stiff. With it, movement becomes flowing and posture steady.

Thus the essence of exercise is not movement alone, nor stability alone, but the **union of both**. Exercise teaches the person to feel first the support of the body – the gathering of the

abdomen, the stance of the pelvis and legs – and from there to extend motion through the arms, shoulders, back, and chest. In this way, movement is no longer random, but ordered, resting on stability.

Returning to the Core

In the end, all exercise returns to the **core**. The core is where postural and phasic muscles meet, and where it is decided whether movement will be correct or broken. When the abdomen is drawn inward, when the diaphragm works together with breathing, and when the lower back is steady – then true inner stability is built. From this foundation, all upper movement becomes smooth and secure.

The core is the **center of gravity of the body**, and also the **center of force transmission**. Without a strong core, the legs cannot bear

well, and the arms cannot move properly. Every exercise, if it does not return attention to the core, remains outward only.

Therefore, the true goal of all exercise – whether of the legs or of the arms – is to strengthen the core, the inner point that unites stability with movement.

Chapter 11 – The Senses and the Core

When we think of the senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch – they seem at first to stand on their own, each in its organ: the eye, the ear, the nose, the mouth, the hand. Yet in truth they are all connected inwardly to the **core**, the center of the body.

A person sees with his eyes, but vision is not complete unless the body is gathered in the

core. The gaze depends on the stability of the head, and the head rests on the inner axis. Hearing also is not only in the ears, but is received more clearly when the body is gathered inward. A scattered person hears and does not absorb; one who is centered in the core hears with clarity.

Smell and taste are tied directly to the core. Smell comes with breathing, and breathing passes through the diaphragm, part of the core. Taste happens in the mouth, yet depends on digestion and the feeling of the abdomen. Touch too depends on the core. The hand reaches outward, but if the body is not stable within, the touch is weak and uncertain. When the person gathers himself in the core, his touch becomes steady and full.

Modern science calls this **interoception** – the inner sense of the body's state, such as hunger, breathing, heartbeat – and this is rooted in the

core. The senses are not separate, but all are perfected only when they return to the inner center.

Thus the core is not only muscles and posture. It is also the place where the senses concentrate. When a person learns to gather himself in the core, his sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch all become deeper, clearer, and more whole.

Chapter 12 – The Core as the Meeting Point of Body and Soul

Within a human being there are two sides – body and soul. At times they seem like two separate entities: the body acting on its own, the soul living on its own. But in truth they are woven together, and neither can stand without the other.

The **core** reveals this most clearly. On the side of the body – the core is inner muscles, the diaphragm, the abdomen, the lower back, the center of gravity. It is the place where the body gathers, the inner point of stability. On the side of the soul – the core is the feeling of self, the sense of "I am here," the inner support of being.

When the core is properly gathered, the soul too is gathered, and the person feels alive and whole. When the core is weak and scattered, the soul is scattered, and the person loses his inner boundary. Thus the feeling of inner strength and certainty depends on the gathering of the core.

This can be seen in daily life. A child who struggles in study often finds success when given inner support – when weight, importance, and a sense of value are added to him. Suddenly things begin to move, learning

flows, and he succeeds. Everyone can testify to this. In the same way, when the body is given a strong core, a sense of weight and inner firmness, then movement begins to flow rightly. The whole body becomes more coordinated, more healthy, more alive.

The senses also are lifted by this. Sight and hearing, smell, taste, and touch all work with clarity when the person knows himself in the core. The core is not only the base of the body, but also the center of the soul.

Here a great secret is revealed: **body and soul are not two, but two sides of one point**. That point is the core. On the side of the body it is muscles and motion; on the side of the soul it is the sense of self. Whoever strengthens the core strengthens himself not only in body but also in soul.

Chapter 13 – The Core in Standing Before Many

There are moments in life when a person stands before a large crowd. All eyes are upon him, every gaze fixed on him. He wishes to appear in every detail – the shoulders upright, the hands moving with grace, the head held high, the face composed. And this creates a great weight upon him, an inner heaviness, as if he must carry a burden too heavy to bear.

This heaviness comes from **scattering**. When a person thinks of each limb separately – how the shoulder stands, how the hand moves, how the head is held – then each becomes a burden of its own. The weight multiplies, and the strain grows heavy upon him.

More than this, when people are looking at him, he often feels a need to **constantly change his movements**. If the hands are

raised – he lowers them. If they are at rest – he raises them. If he stands still – he feels a need to step side to side. He moves again and again, not because he chooses, but because he feels uneasy under the gaze of others.

The simple advice is: **strengthen the core**. When a person gathers himself into the core – the inner abdomen, the diaphragm, the lower back – he becomes quiet. He no longer needs to manage each limb one by one. The whole body aligns on its own, and the restless movements fall away. He can stand for a long time without feeling the need to shift, for there is one center that holds everything firm.

And there is a wonder here. Not only does the person himself become calm, but those around him also receive calm from him. It is as if all rely on his core. In prayer, standing among others in a minyan – each looks at the other, each shifts, one tilts his head, another moves

his hands, another steps with his feet. But the moment one person stands firm on his core, gathered and quiet, immediately the whole group feels settled. The same in giving a speech: when the speaker stands upon his core, calm within, all the listeners sense it, and they too become more at ease.

There is also a very simple practice: place both hands on the area of the core, on the lower abdomen. This awakens the inner sense – *"here is my center."* The hands strengthen the feeling, and the whole body settles.

Thus, standing firmly before many is not a matter of training every limb, but of training the core. The core takes away the outward heaviness and transforms it into inward support – for yourself, and for all who are with you.

Chapter 14 – Girding the Belt – From Gathering the Body to Preparing for Prayer

The belt worn in prayer is not only a piece of clothing. It is an act of preparation. The prophets spoke: *"Prepare to meet your God, O Israel"* (Amos 4:12). Our sages explained that one who stands to pray must gird himself, for it is not proper to appear before the King of kings with garments loose and disordered. Girding is a sign of readiness, of being set and gathered for the encounter.

But this is not only an outer preparation. When a person ties a belt around his waist, he is also gathering his inner body. The front of the abdomen is drawn inward, pressed toward the back, and the whole frame becomes centered. The belt does physically what the core does

naturally: it unites front and back, upper and lower, and brings the person into balance.

The halakhic sources speak of this in terms of separation: *"to distinguish between the heart and the lower parts."* On the outside this is about modesty of dress. Yet inwardly it is also a separation that creates order: distinguishing the higher from the lower, collecting the scattered parts of the self into one line, so that the person can stand focused before God.

This was always the way of men of honor in earlier generations. To "gird the loins" was to be ready – for labor, for battle, for service. It meant to tighten oneself, to prepare, to be firm. So too in prayer. For prayer is nothing less than standing before the King. *"Prepare to meet your God, O Israel"* means: gather yourself, bind yourself, make yourself ready, and only then step into His presence.

Even physiology testifies to this truth. When a person ties a belt firmly, the pressure inside the abdomen – *intra-abdominal pressure* – increases. This supports the spine, strengthens the core, and gives the body greater stability. So from both sides – from halakha and from science – the meaning is the same: girding the belt is not just about holding clothes, but about strengthening the core of the person.

Thus the belt is more than a garment. It is a symbol of preparation. It is the act of drawing front to back, upper to lower, making the body firm and ready. And this is the true way to enter prayer: not scattered and loose, but gathered, centered, and prepared before the One who gives life.

Chapter 15 – What is the Core: The Belt of Inner Muscles

When people look at the body, they usually see the arms, the legs, the chest, and the head. But hidden deep inside there is a ring of muscles that quietly holds everything together. This is called the *core*.

The core is not one single muscle, but a system of deep muscles that surround the trunk: the diaphragm at the top, the pelvic floor at the bottom, the deep abdominal muscles in front, and the multifidus and spinal stabilizers in the back. Together they form a living belt, a natural support system around the center of the body.

This inner belt is not seen from the outside, yet it is the foundation for everything we do. Every step, every breath, every time we sit or stand – the core is working. It stabilizes the

spine, supports the organs of the midsection, coordinates with the diaphragm for breathing, and connects the upper and lower halves of the body.

Without a strong core, the body cannot hold itself properly. The back grows tired, the shoulders collapse, breathing becomes shallow, and even simple movements feel heavy. But when the core is strong, the body stands upright with ease, the breath flows naturally, digestion works more smoothly, and movement becomes light and steady.

The core, then, is not a small detail. It is the hidden center of the human being – a belt of strength within, carrying the whole structure of body and life.

Chapter 16 – Pillar, Seat, and Axis: Standing, Sitting, and Walking

The core shows itself in different ways, depending on how the body is placed. The change between standing, sitting, and walking is not only in the outer position of the body, but in how the core itself holds the human being.

In standing – the body becomes like a pillar. The weight rises from the feet through the legs, up to the trunk and the head. The core is stretched tall, supporting the spine so that it will not collapse. Here the midsection is not drawn deeply inward, but works more like a firm belt, giving stability to the upright frame.

In sitting – the story changes. The weight no longer rises from the feet, but settles onto the seat bones. The upper body would fall forward if not for the inward gathering of the

midsection. In this position, the core works as an inner seat: the abdomen draws inward, the spine is supported from the inside, and the person can sit calmly without effort.

In walking – the body becomes an axis. With every step, one side of the body rises while the other lowers. The core must twist slightly, holding balance between left and right, upper and lower. It is not only the legs that carry the person forward, but the inner belt that keeps the whole movement steady.

Thus we see: the core is not one action, but many. As a pillar in standing, as an inward gathering in sitting, and as a steady axis in walking – it is always present, always holding. And whoever learns to feel this difference begins to sense the deep role of the core in every movement of life.

Chapter 17 – How the Core Shapes Posture, Breathing, and Digestion

The core is not only about strength or movement. It touches three of the most constant functions of life: posture, breathing, and digestion. These three are not separate; they are bound together in the inner belt of the body.

Posture.
When the core is weak, the spine bends forward, the shoulders collapse, and the lower back grows tired. The person must constantly shift and adjust, never fully comfortable. But when the core is active, the body can hold itself upright without strain. The spine is supported from within, like a column set firmly in its base. Good posture is not just appearance – it is the body in its natural balance.

Breathing.
At the top of the core sits the diaphragm, the great sheet of muscle that draws air into the lungs. With each breath it moves up and down, pressing gently upon the organs of the midsection. If the core is weak, breathing becomes shallow, high in the chest, leaving the person restless. But when the core is engaged, the diaphragm and abdominal muscles work together, creating deep and calm breaths. The whole body is nourished with oxygen, and the mind grows steady.

Digestion.
All the organs of the stomach and intestines lie inside the circle of the core. When these muscles are strong, they give gentle support and massage to the inner organs. Food moves through more smoothly, digestion becomes easier, and there is less heaviness or discomfort. But when the core is slack, the

midsection feels heavy, digestion slows, and the person may sense cravings and unrest.

Thus posture, breathing, and digestion – three foundations of daily life – all depend upon the hidden strength of the core. A belt unseen by the eye, yet carrying the human being in every moment.

Chapter 18 – Weakness of the Core: Its Signs and Consequences

When the core is weak, the body cannot hold itself in balance. The signs appear in many small ways, yet together they shape the whole condition of life.

Tired back.

The lower back begins to ache after long sitting or standing, because the deep muscles

that should hold the spine are not doing their work. The larger muscles on the surface try to take over, but they tire quickly, and pain follows.

Collapsed posture.

The shoulders round forward, the chest sinks, and the person feels heavy even while sitting still. Instead of the body resting on its natural frame, it droops, and every position becomes uncomfortable.

Shallow breathing.

Without support from the core, the diaphragm cannot work fully. Breathing rises into the chest, fast and shallow. This leaves the body short of air and the mind restless, unable to settle.

Digestive unrest.

The midsection feels heavy, bloated, or unsettled. Sometimes cravings grow stronger, as the inner organs send confused signals of hunger and pressure. The person may eat more, yet feel less satisfied.

Poor balance and clumsy movement.

With a weak core, the body sways in walking, the steps lose steadiness, and even simple actions demand extra effort. The sense of lightness is gone, replaced by strain and fatigue.

These signs may seem small on their own, but together they show one truth: without a strong core, the human being loses stability, calm, and comfort in daily life. What should be natural becomes a struggle, and the whole person feels weakened.

Chapter 19 – The Strength of the Core: Foundation of Stability and Power

When the core is strong, the whole body finds its natural order. The difference can be felt in every part of life, from the smallest breath to the longest walk.

Steady posture.

The spine stands upright without effort, the shoulders rest in their place, and the head is lifted calmly. There is no strain, no collapse, only quiet balance. The body feels light even in stillness.

Calm breathing.

With a strong core, the diaphragm moves fully, drawing deep breaths into the lungs. Air fills the body, the mind becomes steady, and

energy flows evenly. Each breath nourishes rather than tires.

Clear digestion.

The inner belt of muscles supports the stomach and intestines, keeping them in gentle motion. Food is processed smoothly, heaviness fades, and the body feels at ease after eating. Hunger becomes true need rather than restless craving.

Balance in movement.

Walking, running, bending, or lifting – all become easier. The core holds the upper and lower body together, so that each step is steady and each motion is under control. Energy is not wasted in struggle, but directed with purpose.

Inner confidence.

Perhaps most of all, a strong core gives the person a quiet sense of mastery over the body. Life feels ordered, grounded, and held from within. This is not the strength of surface muscles, but the deep foundation that carries them all.

Thus the strength of the core is not one detail among many, but the root of stability and power. When the center holds firm, everything else is supported; when it falters, all else weakens. The human being stands or falls with the core.

Chapter 20 – Why Man Stands Upright: The Core in Humans Versus Animals

The upright posture of man.

From the beginning, man was set apart from the animals by his upright form. While beasts walk on four limbs and their bodies are drawn toward the ground, man rises upon two feet, his face lifted toward the heavens. This is not only a matter of bones and joints, but also of the hidden belt within — the core.

The role of the core in man.

In humans, the core is not merely a set of muscles for breathing or movement. It is a pillar. The deep abdominal muscles, the diaphragm, the pelvic floor, and the muscles of the lower back together form an inward column. This column carries the trunk,

supports the spine, and allows the body to rise upward without collapsing. Without this core, man could not stand tall.

The body of animals.

In animals, the design is different. The spine lies horizontally, stretched between four legs. The midsection is held like a sling beneath the frame. Their weight does not require an inward pillar, because it is shared equally by the forelimbs and hindlimbs. Thus their core is present, but not as an upright column. It serves for breathing, digestion, and inner support, but not for carrying the body in vertical stance.

Why animals do not stand upright.

It is not weakness that keeps animals from standing upright, but a different structure. Even if their core were stronger, their spine and pelvis are not built to bear the trunk vertically. They are shaped for movement

upon four limbs. The human body, however, was formed for uprightness, and so the core became a true pillar within.

The hidden distinction.

Here lies the wonder: in beasts, balance is sought outward — through four legs and sometimes through a tail that steadies their frame. In man, balance is sought inward — through the core, a third leg hidden in the middle. Animals lean on what is outside; man leans on what is within.

The lesson.

The upright posture of man is not only a gift of bones, but of the core. It is the inner strength that makes him different from the creatures that go on all fours. Through it, man is held tall, steady, and directed upward.

Chapter 21 – Natural Differences in the Core: Nature and Training

Not every human being carries the same kind of core. Just as some are tall and some short, some broad and some narrow, so too the hidden belt of the body differs. These differences come partly from nature, and partly from the way a person grows and trains.

Born Differences in the Core

From birth, the frame of the body sets certain conditions. The width of the pelvis, the curve of the spine, the length of the trunk — these affect how easily the core can hold itself. Some are born with a frame that naturally supports stability. Others have looser joints or less natural balance, and need more training to find steadiness.

The Role of Early Life and Childhood Movement

Childhood is the natural school of the core. A baby that spends long hours rolling, crawling, bridging, climbing — all these hidden exercises — will build a deep, strong core. A child that sits much, moves little, or is restrained from natural play does not develop the same foundation. Early life shapes the strength of the center for years to come.

Strong Outside, Weak Inside

Outer strength does not always mean a strong core. Some people build large chest or arm muscles, yet suffer from back pain and poor balance. Their surface looks powerful, but inside the belt is slack. Without the core, outer muscles cannot hold the body steady.

Weak Outside, Strong Inside

The opposite is also seen. Some appear thin or slight, yet stand tall, walk steady, and tire little. Their secret is a strong core. The hidden

belt ties their movements together, giving balance even without impressive size.

Nature and Training Together

In the end, both nature and habit decide the core. Some begin life with steadiness, others with weakness. But training always matters. The strong can lose their core if they neglect it; the weak can gain a strong core with practice.

Thus the core is not judged by size of muscle or shape of body. It is judged by steadiness at the center. Outer appearance may mislead, but the truth of a person’s strength is found in the hidden belt within.

Part II – Development of the Core in Childhood

Chapter 1 – The Core in Formation: From the Womb to Growth

1. Gathering in the Womb

From the earliest stage of life, the forming child is drawn inward. Every limb, every organ, folds toward the middle. The body begins not as a spread figure, but as a point gathered into itself.

2. The Center as Foundation

Within these hidden months, the core is laid as the base. The heart, the diaphragm, the midsection wall — all are shaped around the

middle. The strength of this inward hold is what allows the body to survive and to grow.

3. Unfolding After Birth

With birth, the movement changes. From the center that was gathered, the limbs now begin to spread outward: arms reach, legs push, the head lifts. The infant learns that every extension begins with the core.

4. The Law of Growth

The stronger the core, the freer the limbs. Weakness in the middle leaves the body unstable; strength in the middle lets the body explore, expand, and act with safety. This is the law of life: inward steadiness gives outward freedom.

5. The Lesson of the Core

From the secret days of the womb until full adulthood, this remains the rule. A gathered

center gives the possibility of wide expansion. The human body itself declares: life flows from the middle, and only when the core holds firm can all the rest unfold.

Chapter 2 – Crying: The Very First Exercise

From the first moment of life, the work of the core begins. The newborn lies on its back, small and helpless, yet already the center is active. The very act of crying – the first sound of life – is in truth the first exercise of the core.

When a baby cries, the diaphragm presses down, the midsection gathers, and the deep muscles tighten. The sound that comes forth is not only a voice, but also the movement of the inner belt. Each cry is a pulse of the core,

drawing the midsection inward and pushing the air outward.

This exercise comes without teaching, without plan. The infant knows nothing of posture or strength, but the body itself is wise. By crying again and again, day and night, the child is training the muscles of the core – giving them tone, awakening them, and preparing the body for all that will follow.

Thus, what seems only a cry of need or discomfort is in fact also a hidden training. The baby is laying the foundation for posture, breathing, and balance. Long before it can sit, crawl, or walk, the child is already strengthening the deep belt that will carry it through life.

In this way the very first act of the human being, the simple cry, is also the very first step in building the core.

Chapter 3 – “Swimming,” Dragging, and Bridging: The Infant’s Work

After the first weeks, the baby begins to discover movement. Though still lying much of the time, the body is never fully still. Each small effort, each twist and push, is another exercise for the core.

Swimming.
Placed on the midsection, the baby waves its arms and legs as if floating in water. This motion, though uncoordinated, demands great effort from the center. The midsection presses down, the back muscles engage, and the core holds the whole trunk as the limbs move freely. It is the first play of strength, and it awakens the deep belt again and again.

Dragging.
Soon the child begins to pull or drag itself

across the surface. Sometimes by pushing with the feet, sometimes by reaching with the arms, the body moves a little forward. Each drag demands that the core connect upper and lower, transmitting force through the midsection. Without this, no movement would carry through.

Bridging.
One of the most striking actions of infancy is the small bridge. Lying on the back, the baby kicks or presses with its feet, lifting the hips from the surface. Again and again it repeats this, almost like play. Yet each lift is a powerful training of the core: the midsection gathers, the lower back strengthens, the whole trunk learns to rise as one.

Day after day, the baby repeats these actions. They may look like random movements, but in truth they are systematic exercises – the natural training ground of the core. Each

wave, each drag, each bridge builds tone and control.

Thus even before sitting, the infant has already worked the center with tireless dedication. The body itself provides the exercises, and the child's growth is the program.

Chapter 4 – Rolling Over, Sitting, and Crawling: Step by Step

The growth of a child is marked by visible milestones, but each of them is carried by the hidden strength of the core. Rolling, sitting, and crawling may look simple, yet each one demands a new level of control from the deep belt of muscles.

Rolling Over.

When the infant first turns from back to midsection, it is not merely a twist of the limbs. The whole trunk must gather and shift. The midsection contracts, the diaphragm lifts, and the back engages, all together pulling the body across. Rolling over is a declaration that the core has gained enough strength to move the body as one.

Sitting.

As the child learns to sit, balance becomes the challenge. The hips rest on the ground, but the spine must hold upright. The surface muscles are not enough; they tire quickly. What steadies the little body is the deep inward gathering of the core. The midsection draws in, the trunk becomes a pillar, and the child can now remain upright without support.

Crawling.

Perhaps the clearest exercise of the core in early life is crawling. Each movement of an arm must match the opposite leg, and the center must hold steady while the limbs move. Without the belt of the core, the child would collapse at each shift. Crawling teaches the core to stabilize the trunk while transmitting force across the body.

These stages are not random. They are the natural sequence of training: roll, sit, crawl. Each step adds a new demand upon the core, and each success shows that the center is becoming stronger, more coordinated, more able to carry the human being forward.

Thus the milestones of growth are also milestones of the core. What looks like play and progress is in truth the hidden schooling of the center.

Chapter 5 – Crossing the Midline: The Core as the Central Axis

What it means to cross the midline.

"Crossing the midline" refers to movements where a hand, foot, or limb reaches across the invisible line that divides the body into right and left. A child who touches the left knee with the right hand, or a baby who grabs the opposite foot, is crossing this line. It may look simple, yet it is one of the key milestones in development.

The midline runs through the core.

The midline is not an abstract idea. It passes directly through the center of the body — the core. Every time a limb crosses that central axis, the core must stabilize and adjust. Without a strong core, the movement becomes awkward or unstable. With a strong core, the motion flows smoothly.

Uniting right and left.

Crossing the midline is not just physical, but also neurological. It brings the right and left sides of the brain to work together. For this cooperation to happen in the body, the core provides the axis of stability. It is the still center that allows the two sides to connect.

Development in children.

In infancy, crossing the midline begins in simple ways: a baby lying on his back grasps the opposite foot; during crawling, the right hand and left knee cross naturally. Each of these moments strengthens the core, teaching the body to balance while the limbs move across.

Growth into maturity.

For older children, exercises that cross the midline — reaching across the body, tapping

opposite shoulders, twisting at the waist — continue to strengthen the core. In adulthood, these same movements are part of sports, dance, and daily life. The core remains the silent support behind them all.

The lesson of the axis.

Crossing the midline shows the hidden truth: every motion from right to left, every union of two sides, depends on the center. The core is that axis. It holds steady so that the limbs can reach across and connect. Without the core, crossing fails; with the core, the body unites in balance.

Chapter 6 – Standing and Walking: Moving into Independence

The day a child first stands is a day of wonder. Yet behind the smile and applause, there is a

quiet truth: the step into independence is carried by the strength of the core.

Standing.

To rise from the ground and remain on two feet is no small task. The legs must hold, the back must lift, but above all the trunk must stay gathered. If the core is weak, the body sways and falls. If the core is strong, the spine stands tall and the child feels steady. Standing is not only balance on the feet – it is the core binding the whole body as a single column.

Walking.

The first steps are wobbly, yet each one is a victory of the center. Walking is not simply moving the legs forward; it is the body shifting weight again and again, left to right, forward and back. Every step demands that the core transfer force, stabilize the trunk, and

catch the balance. Without this hidden belt, the legs would move but the body would tumble.

Independence.

When the child can stand and walk, it has entered a new world – free to explore, to reach, to go. But this freedom rests on the unseen strength of the core. Independence of movement is born from the gathering of the midsection and the support of the inner belt.

Thus the moment of walking is not only an outer milestone, but also an inner one. It marks that the core has matured enough to hold the human upright and to guide each step with steadiness.

Chapter 7 – Childhood Play: Climbing, Jumping, Riding, and Swimming

Once the child has learned to walk, the world becomes a playground. Yet behind every game, every climb and leap, the core is at work, building strength and coordination. Play is not only joy – it is also training for the center.

Climbing.

When a child climbs stairs, trees, or playground structures, the arms pull and the legs push. What connects them is the core. Without the inward belt, the body would dangle without control. With the core engaged, every pull of the arms becomes a rise of the whole body.

Jumping.

A leap into the air is more than strong legs. The midsection must tighten, the spine must hold, and the landing must be absorbed by the core. Each jump, whether small or great, is a lesson in how the center gathers force and protects the body.

Riding.

On a bicycle, the legs turn, but it is the core that holds the trunk steady. Balance depends not only on the wheels, but on the deep muscles that keep the body upright. Riding strengthens the connection between movement of the limbs and stability of the center.

Swimming.

In the water, arms and legs move in wide strokes. Yet it is the midsection and back that tie them together. The core must hold firm while the limbs push against the resistance of water. Swimming, perhaps more than any

other play, shows clearly how the body moves as one when the core is engaged.

Thus every game of childhood is also exercise for the center. The joy of play is at the same time the training of stability. By climbing, jumping, riding, and swimming, the child unknowingly builds a strong core – a foundation that will carry into youth and beyond.

Chapter 8 – Until Age Twenty: The Years of Growth and the Building of a Complete Core

Childhood and youth are years of steady building. From the first cry of the newborn to the leaps and games of school age, every stage has added strength to the core. Yet the process does not stop there. The teenage years and

early adulthood are the time when the core reaches its full measure.

Growth of strength.

Between ages ten and twenty the body lengthens, muscles grow, and the frame becomes adult. During these years the core deepens in tone and coordination. What was once fragile and unsteady becomes firm, able to hold the body in heavy work, in sports, and in long hours of sitting or study.

Difference of ages.

The core of a five-year-old cannot be compared with that of a twenty-year-old. At five, the midsection is soft, the movements playful. At twenty, the belt of muscles has matured. The spine can stand long and tall, the breath can reach deeper, and the whole body can endure greater strain. These are the years

of ascent – the rise of strength and the fullness of the center.

Foundation for life.

By the end of these years, the hidden belt of the core is established. It will carry the human being through work, family, learning, and all tasks of life. If it has been built strong through play, activity, and good habits, the person will enjoy stability and health for decades to come. If it has been neglected, the weakness will appear early in pain and imbalance.

Thus the years until twenty are not only years of outward growth, but of inner foundation. They are the building of a complete core – the hidden structure that supports the whole journey of life.

Chapter 9 – Midline Crossing Exercises

What these exercises are.

There is a special group of movements known as *crossing the midline*. These are exercises where the hands or feet cross the invisible line dividing the body into right and left. They may look simple, but they carry great power in building the core and uniting the body as a whole.

The scientific view.

Developmental science explains that midline crossing trains the brain's two hemispheres to work together. The brain is divided into right and left, connected by the *corpus callosum*, a thick band of nerve fibers. By practicing movements that cross the midline, the two sides of the brain strengthen their connection. This leads to smoother and more complex

movements, and also supports concentration, reading, writing, and problem solving.

In the language of posture and physical training, the core is often described as an *axis* or *pillar*, sometimes as the *center of gravity* or the *stability axis*. It is the inward support that makes crossing the midline possible. When the core is weak, the crossing feels clumsy; when the core is strong, the crossing flows with ease.

Even in psychology, there are related ideas such as “expanding circles of awareness” or “layers of perception.” Though these are usually spoken of in the realm of thought or emotion, the principle is the same: from the center outward, circles expand, and movements that cross the midline help to connect near and far.

Main exercises.

Some of the most well-known midline crossing exercises include:

– **Cross Crawl**: Touching the right hand to the left knee, then left hand to right knee.

– **Lazy 8s / Figure Eight**: Drawing the ∞ (sideways eight) shape in the air with one or both hands. Sometimes done with both hands at once (*Double Doodle*).

– **Windmills**: Reaching the right hand to the left foot and the left hand to the right foot, in wide swinging motions.

– **Cross Touch**: Bringing the right elbow to the left knee, then switching sides.

– **Arm Swings**: Swinging the arms side to side across the body.

– **Side-to-Side Twist**: Rotating the upper body from side to side so that the arms cross the midline.

– **Cross-Body Claps**: Clapping the hands in an X across the body, above and below.

– **Double Arm Circles**: Moving both arms in large circles, each hand crossing the midline, like swimming strokes.

These are also known as *Brain Gym* or *Brain Integration Exercises*, and are widely used in therapy and education.

The inner image.

Beyond all of this, one can sense a deeper picture. The person lives as though surrounded by circles, one within another, with the core as the central point. When one gathers the core, he touches the innermost point. But when he crosses the midline, he is not only touching the point — the arms and legs cut through the surrounding circles as well. The wider the motion, the more circles are crossed, from the

small ones near the center to the larger ones further out.

The lesson.

From the scientific side, crossing the midline unites the brain's two halves and creates smooth coordinated motion. From the inner side, each crossing connects the point at the center with the circles around it. Both meet in the same truth: the core is the axis, the center from which unity and balance flow.

"For the illustrations on the core and on crossing the midline, see the end of the book."

Chapter 10 – The Core in the Wider Development of the Child

Beyond the simple stages of development – from infancy through sitting, standing,

walking, play, study, and emotion – there are broader matters in which the strength of the core becomes clear. These gather together and complete what has been said.

Breathing in Childhood

Look at a small infant lying in the crib. His whole body is at rest, yet his belly rises and falls with every breath. This is inner breathing through the diaphragm. It builds the core from the very beginning. When breathing is shallow, the whole body is weak. When breathing is deep and proper, the body is gathered and alive, and a foundation of stability is formed.

The Sense of Self in Childhood

As a child grows, the sense of "I" begins to appear. He says: "This is mine," "I did it." Many times this frustrates the parents: the child does not obey, insists on his own way,

makes trouble with his brothers and sisters, and at times even with his father and mother. The “I” of the child causes many “problems.” But parents who understand the child’s good know that all this builds his sense of self, and this is essential for his life. It is not a defect, but a building.

And at the very moment the child feels his “I” in the soul, his **core in the body also strengthens**. He stands on his own place, he has inner boundaries, and all the senses align upon it.

Standing Before Others

When the child enters a classroom, or into a group of friends, all eyes are upon him. He feels uneasy, begins to shift side to side, constantly changing his stance. But a child who rests on his core can stand quietly in place, calm and at ease. The core gives him

stability even under the gaze of others, and it even influences them – for when they see one standing calmly, they too are calmed.

Play that Strengthens the Core

Children play naturally: they jump, roll, stand on one leg, climb. All these games, with their laughter and liveliness, strengthen the core. It is not only amusement, but true building. Every jump and roll adds more stability and more inner support.

Parents and the Child's Core

Parents can greatly help the child to discover his core. When they carry him properly, when their hands hold him with firmness, when the mother embraces her child after tears – the child settles, relaxes, and feels as if he has received a new core. Every true embrace adds inner weight and a sense of support.

More than this: parents who understand the matter of the core know that there is not always a need to run to outside helpers. Many times, with small support within the home – proper carrying, standing together, a hug, a simple game – everything works itself out. All depends on the understanding that the child's core is still in stages of development, and every small support strengthens it greatly.

Summary

Thus, the core in childhood is not only a matter of movement and stages of development, but a broad foundation of breathing, of inner identity, of standing before others, of play, and of the bond with parents. All these together show that the core is not only one part of the body, but the center in which body and soul grow as one.

Chapter 11 – The Core in Childhood: Falls and Risings

In the days of childhood there are many falls. The child begins to crawl, tries to stand, tries to walk – and falls. Again he tries to jump, to climb on a chair, to roll a ball – and again he falls. It may seem that his path is full of failures. But in truth, this is no accident. It is the natural process. It is the way the core grows.

For the child's core is still weak. The inner muscles are not yet built, the breathing is not steady, the sense of self is only beginning to awaken, his standing before others is still unsure, and he depends greatly on his parents. All this makes the child fall often. Yet with every rising after a fall – the core gathers a little more, strengthens a little more.

The verse says: **“The righteous falls seven times and rises”** (Mishlei 24:16). This is not only a parable, but the reality of life: the fall itself is part of the rising. The rising that follows builds the inner strength. The child learns not only to stand, but to stand upon inner support – upon a gathered core.

And so it is in every area of childhood:

– **In breathing** – at first it is shallow, but after many attempts, the belly learns to rise and fall deeply, and the diaphragm grows stronger.

– **In the sense of self** – at first the child insists and does not obey, causing trouble with parents and siblings. It seems like a fall. But each standing on “I” strengthens him, and every rising builds his identity.

– **In society** – when he enters a classroom or a group of friends, he is uneasy, restless, shifting. This is a natural fall. But as he rises

again and again, learning to rest on his core, he becomes steady, until he can stand calmly even under the gaze of others.

– **In play** – every jump and roll includes a fall. But the fall itself strengthens the core, and every rising returns him more stability.

– **With parents** – the child cries, falls in his spirit. A true embrace from father or mother restores him, and he rises. In this he receives a new inner weight.

Thus every fall in childhood is not a loss, but a building. The fall shows that the core is still weak, and the rising strengthens it more. Day by day, fall by fall, rise by rise, the core gains another measure, until in maturity it stands strong and whole.

Part III – Keeping the Core in Adulthood and Old Age

Chapter 1 – Between Sitting and Standing: The Exchange of Pillar and Seat

In youth the core grows almost by itself, through play, movement, and endless activity. But in adulthood the rhythm of life changes. Long hours of sitting at work, standing in daily tasks, and less natural play all place new demands upon the center. Now the task is no longer only to build, but to guard.

Standing as a pillar.

When standing, the body becomes a column. The legs support from below, the spine rises

upward, and the core holds the middle. Here the deep muscles act like a belt around the trunk, keeping balance and preventing collapse. If the core is weak, the back tires quickly; if it is strong, standing feels effortless.

Sitting as a seat.

When sitting, the weight shifts. The lower body rests on the chair, but the upper body still must be held. This is where the core works differently: by drawing the midsection inward, the trunk supports itself from within. Sitting without this inward gathering leads to drooping shoulders and a heavy spine. Sitting with a steady core allows long hours of work or study with comfort.

The exchange.

Daily life moves between these two states – standing as pillar, sitting as seat. Each one

calls upon the core in a different way. By learning to sense and strengthen the inward belt in both, the adult guards the foundation of the body.

This awareness marks the shift from youth to maturity: no longer leaving the center to chance, but consciously supporting it in every position. It is the beginning of responsibility for the core – a responsibility that will carry into old age.

Chapter 2 – Simple Daily Practices: Gathering, Breathing, Bridge, and Bird-Dog

Guarding the core in adulthood does not require heavy equipment or long hours in the gym. The most effective practices are simple, quiet, and can be done anywhere. They do not

exhaust the body, but awaken the deep belt and keep it alive.

Gathering the midsection.

The simplest practice is to sit or stand and gently draw the midsection inward. Not a harsh tightening, but a quiet gathering, as if the navel is being pulled back toward the spine. This can be held for moments or for minutes, while reading, working, or listening. Over time it becomes natural, a constant support from within.

Breathing with the diaphragm.

Lying on the back, place one hand on the chest and one on the midsection. Inhale slowly, letting the midsection rise while the chest stays quiet. Then exhale, drawing the midsection gently inward. This trains the diaphragm and the abdominal wall to work

together, giving calm breathing and inner strength at once.

The Bridge.

Lying on the back with knees bent and feet on the floor, lift the hips upward until the trunk forms a line from shoulders to knees. Hold for a few breaths, then lower slowly. This simple bridge strengthens the core, the hips, and the lower back, teaching them to rise as one.

Bird-Dog.

On hands and knees, extend one arm forward and the opposite leg backward. Keep the trunk steady, without twisting or sagging. Hold, then switch sides. This teaches the core to stabilize the spine while the limbs move – the same skill needed in walking and daily tasks.

These four practices – gathering, breathing, bridge, and bird-dog – are enough to keep the

core alive. They can be done in minutes, without strain, yet their effect reaches through the whole day. The key is not force, but steadiness. A little each day guards the foundation for years to come.

Chapter 3 – Sitting at Work: The Quiet Inward Hold at a Desk

Much of adult life is spent sitting – at a desk, in study, in travel. This long sitting can weaken the body if the core is neglected. But the same hours can become quiet training if the inward hold is remembered.

The problem of sitting.

When a person sits without support from the core, the spine slowly bends, the shoulders fall forward, and the lower back begins to ache. The body grows heavy, the breath becomes

shallow, and fatigue sets in. Sitting, which should be rest, becomes a burden.

The inward hold.

The solution is not complicated. While seated, draw the midsection gently inward. Let the deep muscles gather around the trunk, as if embracing the spine from within. This does not disturb reading, writing, or typing. It can be done for minutes or hours, quietly supporting the body.

Support from below and above.

The chair holds the lower body, the desk or lap supports the arms, and the core ties the two together. When the center is engaged, the upper body rests on the lower, and the weight is shared. The person can sit long without pain, because the work is spread through the deep belt rather than forced upon the surface muscles.

A habit of strength.

Over time, this quiet inward hold becomes natural. The body learns to sit upright not by stiffness, but by balance. Fatigue lessens, breathing deepens, and study or work can continue with calm.

Thus even the long hours at a desk can serve as training. The secret is not in adding effort, but in remembering the core – the hidden belt that can make sitting either heavy or light.

Chapter 4 – Everyday Habits: Stairs, Lifting, Walking

Guarding the core does not depend only on set exercises. Daily life itself is full of movements that can either weaken or strengthen the center. By paying attention, even ordinary tasks become quiet training.

Stairs.

Each step upward is more than a push of the legs. The trunk must be lifted with every rise. If the midsection is slack, the weight falls heavily on the knees. If the core gathers inward, the whole body rises together, and the knees are spared. Stairs become a daily lesson in using the center to carry the body upward.

Lifting.

Whether picking up a bag, a child, or a box, lifting without the core strains the back. The spine bends, the lower back takes the weight, and pain follows. But if the midsection is drawn inward and the core engaged, the weight is spread through the trunk and legs. The body lifts as one, and the strain is gone.

Walking.

A walk may seem only a matter of legs, but balance comes from the core. Each step shifts the weight from side to side, and the center must hold steady. When the midsection gathers, the walk is light and steady. Without it, the stride becomes heavy, the shoulders sway, and the body tires quickly.

These habits – stairs, lifting, walking – fill every day. They can drain the body when the core is forgotten, or they can build strength when the core is engaged. The difference lies in a small inward gathering, quiet but decisive, turning common actions into training for life.

Chapter 5 – In Old Age: Keeping Independence and Preventing Falls

As the years advance, the body changes. Muscles lose tone, bones become fragile, balance weakens. Many fear this decline, but

much of it is not fate – it is the result of a center that has been left unattended. A strong core can preserve independence even in old age.

The loss of balance.

Most falls in the elderly come not from weak legs alone, but from a trunk that cannot steady itself. When the core is slack, the body sways, the steps falter, and a small stumble becomes a dangerous fall.

The gift of gathering.

Even in advanced age, the core can be trained. Gentle gathering of the midsection, slow breathing with the diaphragm, light bridging on the bed, steady walking with attention – these keep the inner belt alive. Each practice is small, but together they add years of strength and safety.

Independence.

The difference between dependence and freedom often rests on the core. An elder who can rise from a chair, walk with steadiness, and keep from falling retains dignity and self-reliance. Without the core, even simple tasks demand constant help.

Calm of spirit.

There is also an inner calm that comes from feeling the body held from within. In old age, when many functions weaken, the sense that "I can still gather myself" brings quiet strength to the heart.

Thus, the care of the core is not only for youth or work, but for the whole span of life. In guarding the core, the elder guards independence, safety, and peace.

Chapter 6 – The Core Facing Life's Pressures

The days of adulthood are filled with responsibility. On the one hand, who wants worries? Everyone longs for quiet, for rest, not to be shaken each day by new demands. Yet on the other hand – without worries there is no vitality, no growth. A person's strength is measured by his ability to stand under the weight placed upon him, and in this his inner power is revealed.

In childhood the core grew mainly in the body – in standing, walking, breathing, play. The theme there was falls and risings, movement and games. But in adulthood the strengthening of the core is mainly **on the inner, emotional side**. Here the pressures are not whether the child can stand or stumble, but whether the adult can stand before a world filled with burdens.

Every day brings delays. A person seeks success in his work – he meets obstacles. He seeks to manage home and family – he meets difficulties. He wants to build, to buy, to sell – he encounters creditors, city offices, laws and demands. All these create a heavy weight.

But it is precisely here that the strength of the core is revealed. No longer only as muscles, but as inner stability. The core teaches a person how to hold steady before a demanding customer or a harsh seller, before a creditor or a city clerk. These are not only matters of business, but tests of inner steadiness.

One who has a strong core stands within the pressure and does not collapse. Worries do not break him; they become a weight that strengthens him from within. He learns that the delays themselves are not failures, but part of life. Just as in childhood he fell and rose again until his body was strong, so in

adulthood he falls in disappointments and rises in responsibility – and in this his inner core is strengthened.

Thus, in childhood the core grew in the image of the body – in breathing, standing, and play. In adulthood it grows in different images – in work, in family, in responsibility. And there it is revealed most clearly that the core is not only muscles, but inner support: the power to stand firm before the weight of life.

Part IV – The Core and Digestion

Chapter 1 – Desire for Food as Intestinal Stimulation

Hunger is often thought of as a matter of taste or imagination, but in truth it begins deep inside. The desire for food is born from the intestines themselves.

When the stomach empties and the intestines grow hollow, their walls press and move against each other. These movements send signals upward, declaring a lack within. The feeling is not gentle – it is a demand, sharp and pressing, as if the body itself were calling without rest: “Give food.”

This stimulation is more than thought. It is physical, real, and strong. Hormones like ghrelin rise in the blood, carrying the message to the brain. The person begins to feel not only emptiness but a pull, a drive that will not be quiet until answered.

Often this demand is true, for the body does need nourishment. Yet just as often it is only the restlessness of the intestines, sending signals of craving even when the need is not great. This is why hunger can appear quickly after a meal, or at times when the body is not in real need.

Thus desire for food is not born in the eyes or mouth alone, but in the movements of the midsection itself. The intestines stir, their stimulation rises, and the human being feels the strong pull of appetite.

Chapter 2 – Gathering the Midsection: Changing Inner Sensations

If hunger begins as a restless stirring in the intestines, then even a small shift inside the midsection can change the whole feeling. This is the secret of gathering the core.

When the midsection is loose, the walls of the intestines press and move freely. Every hollow space is felt, every wave of motion is sent as a signal upward, pressing the mind with craving. But when the midsection is gently drawn inward, the inner organs are held in a new position. They shift slightly, press differently, and the restless signals are softened.

This gathering is not a harsh tightening, but a calm inward pull. The navel draws a little toward the spine, the diaphragm and abdominal wall support each other, and the

intestines are steadied. In this state, the demand of hunger is no longer the only voice inside. Other sensations appear: steadiness, calm pressure, quiet breathing.

The appetite does not vanish, but it changes character. Instead of a loud cry for food, it becomes a softer signal, easier to wait with, easier to understand. True hunger is still felt, but false craving fades.

Thus, by gathering the midsection, a person can transform the inner landscape. The stimulation that once drove without mercy becomes part of a broader field of sensations. In this way, appetite is moderated not by willpower alone, but by a direct shift in the body itself.

Chapter 3 – Creating Movement Inside: Room for Shifts and Release

Gathering the midsection does not only hold the organs still. It creates movement and change within. This is why the effect on appetite is so strong.

When the intestines push restlessly, the feeling is sharp and one-sided: “Eat.” There is no room for anything else. But when the core is engaged, the organs are pressed slightly, shifted, and steadied. The sensations are no longer fixed in one place. They begin to move, to spread, to change.

A gentle inward pull of the midsection may press the stomach a little higher, shift the intestines a little lower, or stretch the diaphragm in a new way. These are small movements, but they create variety. Instead of a single harsh message, the body sends many

quiet signals – pressure here, release there, calm across the middle.

This change gives the person room to breathe. Hunger is still present, but it is no longer a command. It becomes one voice among others, softened by the shifting of sensations. The mind feels free, able to wait, able to choose.

Thus the work of the core is not to silence the body, but to open space inside it. By creating movement, it turns a rigid demand into a balanced field. Appetite finds its place, but no longer rules alone.

Chapter 4 – How Gathering Moderates Appetite

The power of appetite lies in its urgency. When the intestines cry out, the message feels

absolute: “Now, at once.” But gathering the midsection changes this urgency.

Softening the demand.

By drawing the abdomen inward, the inner pressure is spread and balanced. The intestines no longer press in one sharp line, and the craving loses its edge. Hunger may still be there, but it is quieter, no longer a shout but a steady signal.

Separating true need from false craving.

When the core is slack, every stirring feels the same – a pull to eat. But with the midsection gathered, the person can sense the difference. Real hunger, when the body truly lacks nourishment, remains. False hunger, born only of restlessness in the intestines, fades into the background.

Teaching patience.

This small shift grants time. Instead of being driven to eat at once, the person can wait, choose, and decide. The appetite is not destroyed – the body still asks for food – but it is moderated, brought into measure.

A natural balance.

This moderation is not forced by strict willpower or denial. It comes naturally, through the body itself. The same core that steadies the spine and deepens the breath also steadies desire. Appetite becomes part of the body's rhythm, not a master over it.

Thus gathering the core is not only an exercise for muscles, but a quiet practice of balance. It changes the voice of hunger from command to invitation, and gives the human being freedom to respond with wisdom.

Chapter 5 – The Core – Between Opening and Closing

There is one principle in all of human life: **every opening brings pleasure, yet weakens the core.**

This is true in every matter. When a person opens himself to food – he feels delight, but at that very moment the core is weakened, for it has opened outward. When he opens himself to a friend, to family, or to any bond or experience – again there is pleasure, but the core is loosened. Opening brings joy, but also dispersion.

And this is the rule: every opening – whether to another person, to eating, or to other matters – always brings pleasure, and always weakens the core.

Here lies the secret of wholeness: **not only to open, but also to close.** Not to remain outside,

but to bring everything back inward. When the food is drawn into the core, becoming part of the self – then it no longer burdens, but strengthens. So it is with every opening: if one knows how to close it back into himself, it becomes added power, not loss.

This is the true work: to open, and then to close. To open to others, and to close back into the self. To open to food, and to close so that it becomes part of the body. To open to the world, and to close so that it becomes inner building.

From here we can understand the wonder of the delight of the righteous in fasting. For in fasting there is no opening at all, but complete inward closing. The core is gathered with great force, heavy and firm. And the person senses himself strongly, feeling the depth of his own being. This itself becomes delight. It

is not the delight of opening, but the delight of closing.

Thus, there are two kinds of delight in the world:

1. The delight of opening – when one opens to the outside.
2. The delight of closing – when one gathers inward.

And the wholeness of man is that he can do both: to open truly, and to close truly. To make everything that comes from outside into part of his own self. This is the building of the core.

Chapter 6 – Calm Digestion and Steady Breathing: Living in Balance

When the core is gathered, the benefits reach beyond appetite. The same action that moderates craving also brings calm to digestion and depth to breathing.

Digestion eased.

The gentle inward pressure of the abdominal wall supports the intestines in their work. Food is moved along more smoothly, the stomach empties in its time, and heaviness is reduced. Instead of a restless midsection that demands and disturbs, the organs are steadied, and the process of digestion flows with ease.

Breathing deepened.

With the midsection drawn inward, the diaphragm works in harmony with the abdominal muscles. Each inhale reaches

deeper, each exhale gathers more fully. Breathing slows, becomes calm, and nourishes the body with steady oxygen. The restlessness that often accompanies shallow chest-breathing is replaced with quiet strength.

The unity of functions.

Posture, appetite, digestion, and breath are not separate matters. They meet in the core. When the deep belt is weak, all of them falter: the spine collapses, cravings shout, digestion slows, breathing shortens. When the core is strong, all of them are lifted: the trunk stands, appetite softens, digestion clears, breathing deepens.

A life in balance.

The gathering of the core is therefore more than a physical exercise. It is a way of living in balance – a practice that brings steadiness to body and calm to spirit. By drawing the

midsection inward, the human being draws life itself into measure, where each part serves its place and no part rules alone.

Part V – The Core and the Soul

Chapter 1 – Control of Inner Organs: A Power Not Given to Man

Most of the inner life of the body lies beyond our reach. The heart beats on its own, the stomach digests without command, the liver cleanses the blood, the kidneys filter – all without a single choice from us. Day and night these organs work in silence, and man has no direct control over them.

This is the nature of life: the hidden organs are not in our hands. We can lift an arm, walk with our feet, speak with our mouth, but we cannot tell the heart to stop or the intestines to move faster. The inner world is closed to our will.

And yet, there is one small opening. The diaphragm and the deep abdominal wall – the very core – can be moved at will. A person can choose to inhale deeply, to exhale slowly, to hold the breath, to draw the midsection inward, to release it outward. Here, in the middle of the body, the will and the inner organs meet.

This is a rare gift. Through the core, the human being is allowed a point of influence upon the hidden world inside. By gathering the midsection and guiding the breath, he can calm the heart, soften the intestines, and steady the whole body.

Thus, while most of the inner life is not given to man's command, the core stands as an exception. It is the one place where the body opens a door to the will. And through that door, the human being learns what it means to hold both body and soul together.

Chapter 2 – The Diaphragm: The One Inner Gateway

The diaphragm is a wide sheet of muscle stretching across the body, separating chest from midsection. With every breath it rises and falls, drawing air into the lungs and pressing gently upon the organs below. It works endlessly, even in sleep, without thought or command.

Yet unlike the heart or liver, the diaphragm also listens to the will. A person can choose to breathe deeply or shallow, to hold the breath, to sigh, to speak. Each of these acts is possible because the diaphragm is under both automatic control and conscious control. This dual nature makes it unique among the inner organs.

When the diaphragm lowers, the lungs fill with air and the midsection expands. When it rises, air is pushed out and the midsection draws inward. In this way the diaphragm works hand in hand with the abdominal wall, forming the living belt of the core. Together they link breath, posture, and digestion into one movement.

Through the diaphragm, a person gains access to the hidden world inside. By guiding the breath, the rhythm of the heart can be calmed, the intestines steadied, the mind quieted. What cannot be commanded directly can be touched through this gateway.

Thus the diaphragm is not only a breathing muscle, but the one inner gateway of man. It is the bridge between the will and the organs, between what is hidden and what is known. To understand the diaphragm is to understand how the body opens its secret door to the soul.

Chapter 3 – Gathering the Midsection: The Wondrous Sense of Inner Mastery

Among all the movements of the body, few give such a strong feeling of mastery as gathering the midsection. It is simple, almost invisible, yet it touches the deepest parts of the self.

When the midsection is drawn inward, the person feels that something hidden has answered his will. Not the hand or the foot, which are easy to command, but the inner organs themselves seem to shift. The stomach presses differently, the intestines quiet, the diaphragm steadies. A new calm spreads inside.

This creates a sense unlike any other: *I can hold myself from within.* The body no longer feels like a house in which one lives as a guest, but as a place one truly owns. The human being feels that he is master not only of outer movements, but also of the secret spaces within.

The wonder is in the ease. There is no need for heavy effort, no running or lifting. One can be seated, at rest, even at a desk – and with a quiet gathering of the midsection, the core awakens. The body changes, the breath deepens, the hunger softens, the spirit steadies.

It is this rare mastery – calm, inward, and steady – that makes gathering the midsection so powerful. It does not conquer the body by force, but embraces it from the center. And in that embrace, body and soul find their meeting place.

Chapter 4 – Changing Inner Feelings: From Pressing Desire to Patience

The movements of the inner organs often rule the human being without mercy. Hunger presses, the midsection feels heavy, the breath shortens, and the mind is pulled along with these signals. Desire becomes sharp and urgent, leaving little room for thought.

But when the midsection is gently gathered, the inner signals shift. What was one harsh demand becomes many quieter sensations. The stomach presses in a new way, the intestines find balance, the breath flows deeper. The inner cry softens.

This change reaches the feelings. The appetite that once demanded “now” turns into a signal

that can wait. Restlessness eases, calm takes its place. The person begins to sense patience – not forced, but natural, born from the body itself.

In this way the core becomes a teacher of the soul. By learning to shift the inner sensations, one also learns to shift the inner states of heart and mind. The body no longer drives the soul with pressing desire; instead, the soul is given space to choose, to wait, to be steady.

Thus gathering the midsection is more than an exercise. It is a practice of patience, a training of character, a quiet lesson that begins in the body but spreads into the heart. From pressing desire to calm endurance – the path is opened by the core.

Chapter 5 – The Core as Body–Soul Meeting Point

The body and the soul are often spoken of as two worlds. The body moves, breathes, eats, and tires. The soul thinks, feels, desires, and chooses. Yet in most places they seem apart, each one working in its own sphere.

The core is the place where they meet.

When the midsection is gathered, the act is physical: muscles tighten, the diaphragm shifts, the organs press against each other. Yet at that very moment, the soul feels something new: calm, steadiness, patience, even clarity of thought. A single physical action gives rise to a spiritual state.

This union is rare. Moving an arm does not change the feelings of the heart. Lifting a foot does not bring patience. But drawing the midsection inward touches both body and soul

at once. It is as if the hidden gate between them has been opened.

In this meeting point, the human being discovers that he is not divided. He is not half body and half soul, but one whole, held together by the deep center. The core is not only a muscle belt, but the inner bond of the human being.

Thus the core stands as the bridge, the joining point, the secret place where body and soul are not two but one. Whoever learns to gather it discovers not only strength of body, but also strength of heart.

Chapter 6 – The Core and the Soul – Unity of Body and Soul

There is a great principle: the soul and the body are not two separate things, but move

together. Every movement of the soul touches the body, and every movement of the body touches the soul.

When the soul bursts outward – in anger, in excessive speech, in unmeasured excitement – the body immediately feels the scattering of the core. It is hard to stand firmly, the breathing becomes shallow, the limbs are tense, there is no stability. This is the dispersion of the soul revealed in the core. And the opposite is also true: when the soul is scattered, roaming outside and unsorted, it cannot connect to the core, it cannot feel itself. The body becomes heavy, tense, without inner strength.

Especially in anger – the core is broken open, all the self goes outward. And even after the anger has passed, it takes time for a person to return to himself. Sometimes a day or two, and sometimes even a week, until the core is

rebuilt. This is a very real sensation – one can feel clearly how the center has been weakened, and must be gathered again.

So it is with other traits. In pride – the soul swells, and the core is loosened. In stubbornness – the soul locks, and the core hardens. In joy – when true and inward – the core is strengthened; when wild – the core is wasted. All depends on the link of body and soul.

Here too is the place of **trust (bitachon)**. The holy books are full of teachings on trust in God. But the feeling of trust is not only an idea of the mind; it is a place in the soul – and it is hidden in the core. When the core is gathered, a person feels inner support, the confidence to stand, and the ability to surrender himself to God. When the core is weak – trust disappears, and the person is

confused. Thus the core is the place of the feeling of trust.

So it is in prayer – when one gathers into the core, his words come out in order, with quiet, with depth. When the core is scattered – his prayer is scattered. And so in speech – when the core holds, the words come with measure and weight; when it does not hold, the words burst forth, lacking depth.

The sense of self also dwells there. Not only the self of the body, but the self of the soul. There a person feels "I," and there his identity is measured. When the core is gathered – the self is strong, and he stands in his place.

Thus the whole movement of the soul – its traits, its trust, its prayer, its speech, its identity – all are bound with the core. And when the core is gathered and strong, the soul

too is gathered and strong. This is a subtle yet fully real unity – the oneness of body and soul.

Part VI – The Core in Daily Life

Chapter 1 – Sitting to Study: How the Core Allows Focus

Long hours of study or work are not carried only by the mind. The body must also be able to remain steady, upright, and calm. Here the core plays a hidden but decisive role.

When a person sits without gathering the midsection, the spine bends, the shoulders sink, and the back grows tired. Soon the mind follows – restless, distracted, unable to focus. The weakness of the body becomes the weakness of thought.

But when the core is engaged, the story changes. By quietly drawing the midsection inward, the trunk supports itself. The spine is

held upright without strain, the breath deepens, and the body grows calm. In this state, the mind can rest on its work without disturbance.

This is why many find that true focus comes not only from clearing the mind, but from steadying the body. A gathered core makes sitting light, even for long hours. The fatigue that once broke concentration is replaced by quiet balance.

Thus the core becomes a partner in study. The inward hold of the midsection supports the outward work of the mind. Together they create the stillness in which thought can grow deep.

Chapter 2 – The Core in Prayer: Standing and Sitting Before God

Prayer is not only words of the lips or thoughts of the mind. It is also the posture of the body — the way one stands, bows, and sits in stillness. In each of these, the core has its place.

Standing.

In prayer while standing, the whole body becomes a column. The feet are firm, the spine rises, and the trunk must be steady. If the core is slack, the body sways and the mind is pulled with it. If the midsection is gently gathered, the person feels held upright from within, able to stand with quiet dignity before God.

Bowing.

Even a simple bow draws upon the core. The hips hinge forward, but it is the inward support

of the midsection that protects the spine and guides the movement. The bow becomes not collapse, but graceful strength.

Sitting.

In the parts of prayer done seated, the same truth returns. The lower body rests on the chair, but the upper body must still be held. With the core engaged, sitting is steady, not slouched, and the mind is free to attend to the words.

Prayer, then, is a meeting of body and soul, and the core is the bridge. When the midsection is gathered, the body does not disturb the spirit, but supports it. The person can give heart and mind fully to prayer, knowing that the body itself is in harmony with the soul's work.

Chapter 3 – The Core in Lying and Sleep: The Center Even at Rest

Rest is not the absence of the core. Even in lying down and sleep, the center continues to shape the body's well-being.

Lying on the back.

When the body rests flat, the spine is supported by the surface, yet the inward gathering of the midsection can still be felt. A gentle draw of the abdomen presses the lower back into the bed, relieving strain and giving calm to the organs.

Lying on the side.

On the side, the trunk must balance between gravity and support. A quiet inward hold steadies the midsection, keeps the spine aligned, and makes breathing deeper. Even

without effort, the core remains the belt that ties the body together.

Falling asleep.

For many, restlessness comes when the midsection is slack and the breath shallow. By gathering the midsection lightly and breathing with the diaphragm, the body calms and the mind softens. Sleep comes easier, because the inner signals are quieted and steadied.

During sleep.

Though the will is silent, the diaphragm continues its work. Each breath moves the core, massaging the organs, keeping circulation and digestion alive. The inner belt never ceases; it carries the body even in the night.

Thus the core is not only for waking hours. It is the center even at rest, guarding posture,

breath, and calm. Sleep itself becomes deeper and more refreshing when the core is steady, showing that its influence reaches through every moment of life.

Chapter 4 – The Core in Movement: Walking, Running, Climbing, Working

The core is most clearly tested in motion. Every step, every climb, every task calls upon the center to hold the body together. Without it, movement becomes heavy and unsteady. With it, movement becomes light and strong.

Walking.

Each step shifts the body's weight from side to side. The legs carry, but the core steadies. A gathered midsection prevents swaying, keeps

the spine upright, and makes the walk smooth and calm.

Running.

In running, the forces grow stronger. The feet strike the ground, the arms swing, the breath quickens. If the core is weak, the body shakes and tires quickly. If the core is strong, the trunk is steady, the breath is deep, and the run feels free.

Climbing.

Whether stairs, hills, or ladders, climbing is not only the work of legs and arms. The pull and push must pass through the center. The core ties the upper and lower body together, making each reach of the arms and press of the feet lift the whole frame upward.

Working.

In daily labor — lifting, bending, carrying — the core is the protector. Without it, the back strains and injuries follow. With it, the weight is shared, the spine is safe, and the work is lighter.

Thus movement is never separate from the core. Walking, running, climbing, working — all depend on the inner belt. It is the hidden strength that makes motion steady, safe, and full of power.

Chapter 5 – The Core as a Way of Life: Quiet Gathering Throughout the Day

The strength of the core does not come only from exercise sessions or special times of training. Its real power is found when it

becomes part of daily life — a quiet gathering that accompanies every moment.

In sitting.

While working, reading, or traveling, the midsection can be gently drawn inward. This steady hold makes sitting light and upright, prevents fatigue, and allows the mind to remain calm.

In standing.

While waiting, speaking, or listening, the core can be engaged like a pillar. Instead of swaying or slumping, the trunk is firm, the breath deep, and the body at ease.

In walking.

Even a simple walk to the store or through the home can be practice. With each step, the midsection gathers, the spine steadies, and the movement becomes smooth and balanced.

In moments of pause.

During stress or strong appetite, a quiet inward hold of the core shifts the inner sensations. The body calms, the desire softens, and the person regains balance.

In this way, the core is not a task to remember from time to time, but a companion of the whole day. Gathering the midsection becomes as natural as breathing, as constant as posture. It is a way of living — steady, calm, and whole.

Chapter 6 – The Core and Patience: Standing Still in the Midst of Restlessness

In daily life, there are many moments of waiting — in a line, at a station, in a place where time seems to move slowly. Often the

body begins to wander: a step here, a shift there, hands restless, mind unsettled. The feeling is: “I cannot stay still.”

This restlessness is not only in the mind; it is in the body. When the core is slack, the trunk has no anchor. The legs grow uneasy, the shoulders move, the whole frame seeks relief by motion. Waiting becomes heavy, patience disappears.

But when the midsection is quietly gathered, the core becomes a seat within. The body finds its hold not in shifting from side to side, but in the inward belt that steadies from the middle. Suddenly there is no need to wander. One can stand calmly, resting upon the center itself.

This change gives rise to patience. What seemed like wasted time is no longer a burden, because the body itself is at peace. The person feels, “I am held from within, I can wait.” The

restless energy that once drove the limbs is turned into quiet strength at the core.

Thus the act of gathering the midsection is not only for exercise, not only for health. It is a practice of patience. It allows the human being to stand in stillness, even when time stretches long, even when the mind seeks distraction. Through the core, waiting becomes calm, and patience becomes natural.

Chapter 7 – The Core as the Third Leg

The upper body.

It is plain to every person that the upper half of the body — chest, shoulders, head, and arms — rests upon the core. Without the inward gathering of the midsection, the weight of the trunk presses down on the spine, the

back tires, and the body collapses. When the core is engaged, it becomes an inner pillar that carries the whole upper body. Thus it is simple and clear that the upper half always leans upon the core.

The hidden truth of the lower body. What is less obvious is that even the lower half — the hips, thighs, and legs themselves — also depend upon the core. It may seem that the legs alone are the full support, yet in truth they cannot stand without the inward pillar.

The law of weight.

This follows the law of balance seen everywhere in the world: any object with only two legs cannot stand. A table with two legs, no matter how thick, will always topple. But with three legs, even if they are thin, it stands firm and steady.

The third leg in man.

So it is with the human body. The two visible legs are not enough on their own. They can hold the weight only because there is also a third leg — hidden, inward, unseen — and that is the core.

The wonder.

This is a great wonder: the core does not only carry the upper body, but also gives stability to the lower body itself. The legs are only outward columns; their balance depends entirely on the inward column.

The lesson.

The core is the third leg of man. It is unseen, but it is the foundation of standing. Just as every chair or table in the home needs three legs to remain upright, so too the body of man

stands only through the inner leg at his center — the hidden strength of the core.

Chapter 8 – The Core Throughout the Whole Day

The core is not only present at certain times or in special states. It accompanies a person the entire day, in every simple movement of life.

At home and with family – when one lives with his wife and children, all his conduct depends on the core. If the core is healthy and gathered, the whole home takes on a different atmosphere. Speech is calm, conduct is balanced, and even in times of pressure there is inner quiet. If the core is weak – everything scatters, leading to anger, irritation, and disorder.

On journeys – whether walking on the road, or sitting in a car or bus – one who rests upon the core remains steady. Even when the body is shaken, his inwardness is gathered. But when the core is not strong, every small jolt unsettles him, and he loses his composure.

With friends – in meetings, conversations, or shared meals – when the core is strong, a person speaks calmly, knows when to open and when to be silent, and is not lost in the words or in the gaze of others. But when the core is weak, he becomes scattered, his speech runs with the flow, and he has no inner hold.

In rest – when a person sits to drink, or takes repose after a long day – here the core is felt even more. If the core holds, rest itself is gathered, and the body is strengthened. But if the core is broken, even rest is no rest.

Our Sages said: **“A sigh breaks half a man’s body; some say, all of it”** (Sanhedrin 110b). For indeed the whole body stands upon the core. When a person sighs, he bursts the core outward, and his body is broken. Sometimes half the body – sometimes all of it. This shows how the core is truly the foundation upon which both body and soul rest.

Thus, the whole day – at home, on the road, with friends, in rest – all depends on the core. When it is healthy, life flows in a straight way. When it is broken, life becomes confused.

Part VII – Science and Experience

Chapter 1 – A Letter to the Scientists – What This Book Adds

You, the scientists, have already spoken much about the core. You have written of *spinal stability*, of *intra-abdominal pressure*, of *segmental control* and *dissociation*, of *ground reaction forces*, and of *anticipatory contraction*. All of these are established and well-known in modern research.

The purpose of this book is not to add another experiment or another graph. Its contribution lies elsewhere: in uniting all of these terms under one simple and living language. Instead of a scattered collection of technical phrases,

the core is here described as the power of **contraction and expansion**, the act of **gathering inward and rising upward**.

Science describes the body as systems and functions. Here the body is described as an inner experience, where every detail – the pressure from the ground, the drive of the legs, the contraction of the abdomen, the firmness of the spine – all become aspects of one inner movement.

Another point of novelty is that science rarely asks: *what does the person actually feel?* This book insists that subjective sensation is not secondary but central. The personal feeling of drawing the abdomen inward, of the tension between front and back, of the upper body turning against the lower – these sensations are not mere impressions, but the very processes that science measures. In this way,

the personal and the scientific are shown to be two views of the same reality.

And finally, the book goes beyond what science normally touches: it shows that these bodily processes are also parables for the work of the soul. Just as there is no rising without pressing down, and no expansion without contraction, so too in the inner life of man: there is no true elevation without grounding, no opening without gathering.

What This Book Offers to Scientists

1. **A unifying language** – Many terms and findings expressed in the simple principle of contraction and expansion.
2. **The inner experience** – A description of what the person feels when the

processes occur, placed alongside the external measurements.

3. **The connection to the soul** – A framework where body, emotion, and spirit are one continuum rather than separate domains.

Chapter 2 – The Closest Scientific Field – Biomechanics

This book is not a scientific manual in the usual sense. It does not bring graphs and tables, nor does it present experimental measurements. Its aim is to illuminate the human experience of the body and to connect that experience with the life of the soul, all in simple language.

Yet the book stands very close to existing sciences. The closest field is **Biomechanics**.

Biomechanics studies the forces acting on the human body and the body's responses: how the feet press into the ground and the ground returns force (*ground reaction force*), how the spine maintains stability under load (*spinal stability*), how the deep core muscles create a base for all movement (*core stability*), and how the body functions as one kinetic chain (*kinetic chain*).

All of these are the very principles explained here in inner language – that the abdomen is gathered inward to the spine, that the legs press downward so that the head may rise upward, that the upper and lower body can move against each other, and that the core is the place of contraction and expansion.

There are also connections to **Kinesiology** (the science of human movement), to **Exercise Physiology** (the study of muscles, breath, and energy in movement), and even to

Psychophysiology (which explores the link between bodily sensations and emotional states).

But above all, the closest field is the **Biomechanics of Human Movement**. For although this book is written in a simple and even Hasidic style, it is in truth describing the very same phenomena that scientists describe with technical terms: stability, motion, forces, and muscles.

Chapter 3 – What Researchers Say: Diaphragmatic Breathing and Core Practice

Modern research has begun to uncover what the body has always known: the core is not only a belt of muscles, but a center that influences the whole of life.

Diaphragmatic breathing.

Studies show that breathing with the diaphragm — letting the midsection rise and fall — activates the parasympathetic nervous system, the body's natural "rest and calm" response. This lowers heart rate and blood pressure, reduces stress, and even improves digestion. The act of drawing breath deeply is both physical and emotional, steadying the body and the mind at once.

Core stability.

Other studies focus on the link between the deep abdominal muscles and the stability of the spine. They find that weak core muscles are tied to chronic back pain, while strengthening the core reduces pain and improves posture. The muscles of the midsection and back are not separate from health — they are its hidden foundation.

Digestive health.

Medical research also shows that diaphragmatic breathing and abdominal exercises act like a gentle massage for the stomach and intestines. They ease bloating, help food move more smoothly, and reduce discomfort. What feels like a small inward movement reaches deep into the organs.

Awareness of the inner body.

Scientists speak of *interoception* — the sense of the body's inner state. Training the core and diaphragm sharpens this awareness. People learn to notice subtle signals from the heart, lungs, and midsection, and to respond with calm rather than restlessness.

Thus the researchers confirm what life itself has shown: the core is not only a muscle group. It is a center where posture, breath, digestion, and emotion meet. By engaging it,

the human being steadies not only the body, but the whole self.

Chapter 4 – Effects on the Nervous System and Digestion

The research on the core reveals how deeply this hidden belt shapes the inner systems of the body. Two of the most striking fields are the nervous system and digestion.

The nervous system.

The body is guided by two great branches of nerves: the sympathetic, which prepares for action, and the parasympathetic, which brings rest. When the midsection is slack and the breath shallow, the sympathetic system often dominates, leaving the body restless, tense, and alert. But when the diaphragm moves fully and the midsection is gently gathered, the

parasympathetic system awakens. The heart slows, the muscles relax, the mind clears. A simple inward movement shifts the whole balance of the nerves.

Digestion.

The intestines are not passive tubes; they are alive with waves of motion. These waves are strongly influenced by the state of the core. When the midsection is gathered and the diaphragm moves, the organs receive a steady massage. Food passes more smoothly, bloating decreases, discomfort is eased. Research shows that diaphragmatic breathing helps with disorders such as reflux, constipation, and irritable bowel syndrome. The inner rhythm of digestion is directly calmed by the core.

The bridge between them.

The nerves and the gut are bound together, often called the “gut–brain axis.” Signals rise

from the midsection to the brain, shaping mood, hunger, and even thought. By engaging the core, one can soften these signals, steady them, and quiet the restless cry of appetite. The body's inner world becomes calmer, and the mind follows.

Thus the effect of the core is not limited to muscles. It is a key that turns the balance of nerves and digestion, giving the human being both physical comfort and emotional peace.

Chapter 5 – Interoception: Awareness of the Inner Body

Beyond posture, breath, and digestion, the core also awakens a deeper sense — the ability to feel the inner body. Scientists call this *interoception*.

What is interoception.

Just as the eyes see the outer world and the ears hear sound, interoception is the sense by which a person feels what is happening inside. It is the awareness of heartbeat, breath, fullness of the stomach, and even the quiet stirrings of the intestines.

The role of the core.

When the midsection is gathered and the diaphragm moves deeply, these inner signals become clearer. A person begins to notice: “My breath is calm,” “My hunger is true,” “My body feels steady.” What was once hidden noise becomes an understandable language.

Benefits of awareness.

Research shows that strong interoception is tied to emotional balance. Those who sense their inner state more clearly are better able to manage stress, control appetite, and calm

anxiety. By training the core, the doorway to this sense is opened wider.

Body and soul together.

This awareness is not only physical. When a person feels the body from within, the soul is also drawn inward. The self becomes whole, no longer divided between outer action and inner silence. The core becomes the meeting ground of sensation and spirit.

Thus interoception reveals the hidden gift of the core: it teaches the human being to know himself from the inside. By gathering the midsection and breathing with depth, one gains not only strength but also self-knowledge, the quiet sense of life within.

Chapter 6 – Science and Simple Life: Two Languages, One Gate

Science speaks in terms of nerves, muscles, hormones, and signals. Simple life speaks in terms of hunger, calm, breath, and strength. At first they may seem like two different worlds, but when we look closely, both are describing the same gate — the core.

The scientific view.

Researchers describe how diaphragmatic breathing activates the parasympathetic system, how abdominal contraction steadies digestion, how interoception sharpens awareness of inner states. Their language is precise, filled with measurements and studies.

The lived view.

A person at home says: “When I draw my midsection in, I feel less hungry,” “When I

breathe deeply, I feel calm," "When I sit with my core, my back does not hurt." No charts or machines are needed — only the honesty of daily experience.

The meeting point.

Both languages are true, and both point to the same place. Science shows the pathways; simple life shows the experience. Together they reveal that the core is not only a set of muscles, but a center that touches the whole of human life.

One gate.

Through this gate, body and soul, knowledge and experience, health and patience all meet. Science can explain how the core works, but only life itself can show what it means to feel it. In this meeting, the human being gains both understanding and wisdom.

Thus the core stands as one gate with two doors: one opening to research, the other to lived experience. And whoever walks through either finds the same truth waiting inside.

Chapter 7 – The Core: Key to Health of Body and Balance of Soul

At the end of research and experience alike, one truth shines clear: the core is not a small detail of anatomy. It is the hidden key that unlocks both the health of the body and the balance of the soul.

For the body.

With a strong core, the spine is supported, breathing is deep, digestion is smooth, and movement is steady. Pain lessens, fatigue decreases, and the body finds its natural

strength. Without it, weakness spreads, posture collapses, and discomfort grows.

For the soul.

The same inward gathering that steadies the body also steadies the heart. Appetite is softened, restlessness calmed, patience awakened. The person feels able to wait, to choose, to live with measure. What was once a demand becomes a decision.

The double gift.

Few practices give such a double gift: health for the body and balance for the soul. Running strengthens the legs, but not the patience. Reading trains the mind, but not the digestion. Gathering the midsection does both at once — a single act reaching into both worlds.

The key.

This is why the core stands as a key. It is small, quiet, and often overlooked, yet it opens the great doors of life. Through it the human being finds steadiness in flesh and calm in spirit, held together by the strength of the center.

Thus the journey ends where it began: the core is not only muscle, but a hidden gate. Whoever learns to gather it finds the key to wholeness — health of body, balance of soul.

Chapter 8 – The Core – Between Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science

From ancient times, nations of the world spoke of the center of the body, the place where a person's life and strength are gathered. In China it was called *tan tien*, in

Japan – *hara*, and in Greek writings – *pneuma*, the power of breath and belly. All these traditions point to one reality: there is an inner core, the foundation of man, where his stability rests.

Modern science now continues to uncover the same truth. In biomechanics, it is shown that the deep muscles of the abdomen and back form an inner "belt" that supports the spine. In studies of the *gut-brain axis*, it has been revealed how feelings in the belly influence decisions in the brain – even the sense of heaviness or lightness in the body's center shapes a person's mood and choices. In the field of *interoception* – the sense of the inner organs – we see how inner bodily awareness itself brings a person to self-awareness.

Beyond complex research, there are also simple measures that every person can test without instruments: by attending to his

breathing, his heartbeat, the weight in his belly, he can feel at once whether his core is strong or weak.

And a clear sign is visible to the eye: when the core is weak – the back and shoulders fall forward. Some call it **bent**, others say **stooped**, or **slumped shoulders**, and in Yiddish it is called a **hoiker**. All these names point to one reality – the inner core has fallen, and no longer gathers the body. But when the core is strong – the back is upright, the shoulders steady, the head carried with dignity, and the whole body shows stability.

Once I asked a kind of doctor: “Why does my back fall and stoop?” He told me that the root lies in the core. I asked him, “Can it be fixed?” He answered: “It is like a crooked tree. What do you do? You pull it strongly to the opposite side, and then it returns to the middle.” So too, a person must draw his back and shoulders

upward and backward, and then they will return to balance. In that moment I understood what Rambam taught: that all traits must come to the middle path, and the way to reach the middle is sometimes to go first to the opposite extreme. From afar I saw that it all belongs to the core – the core is what clings to a trait or posture, and it is the core that must be reshaped and gathered back into depth.

And what of the future? It is certain that research will reveal more and more. What the Sages and the wise already knew by simple sense – that the core is the support of both body and soul – modern science is confirming slowly, step by step. We may envision a future in which the sense of the core will be recognized as the foundation of health – not only in muscles and breathing, but also in the soul, in traits, and in a person's trust and confidence.

Thus, all paths – ancient wisdoms, scientific research, simple daily testing, and even visions for the future – all point to one center: the core is the place where the life of body and soul are gathered, and its strength is seen in every stance and movement.

Chapter 9 – Two Pathways to Strengthen the Core – Uprightness and Bending

There are different ways a person can strengthen the core within. Some teachers emphasize standing upright, raising the head and pulling the shoulders up and back. Others emphasize the opposite, bending the back and allowing nature to do its work.

In modern biomechanics, these two approaches are described as two distinct

schools of core training. One is called **Active Bracing** – active strengthening through upright posture and engagement of the postural muscles. The other is called **Passive Recoil** – passive strengthening through bending and release, in which exhalation and intra-abdominal pressure naturally gather the core inward. Though the two ways appear opposite – one through effort, the other through relaxation – in truth both bring about the same result: deeper stability and strengthening of the core.

When a person stands tall and pulls the shoulders back, the chest expands, the upper muscles contract, and the core itself narrows and is drawn toward the spine. In this state the core becomes firm and stable, serving as an internal pillar that holds up the whole body. In scientific language this is called **Active Bracing**, where the postural muscles – such as

the erector spinae and trapezius – actively brace the spine to create stability.

Yet when a person bends the back and shoulders, resting the hands upon the knees, or sits in a chair leaning forward with hands on the armrests, there is no need for force. One simply allows nature to work. As the breath leaves the body, the abdomen folds inward by itself, and the core gathers deeper and deeper within. In scientific language this is described as **Passive Recoil**, or **Diaphragmatic Breathing**, where intra-abdominal pressure naturally engages the core without conscious effort.

This principle is also recognized in the wisdom of the body preserved in ancient traditions. In some teachings, two opposite postures express the same idea: one, where the body lengthens upright, and another, where the abdomen naturally gathers inward. Both are

seen as ways of engaging the core. In other traditions as well, the central focus is on the inner center – the seat of the core – and practice alternates between effortful action and deep release.

Thus we see that both ways, uprightness and bending, though seemingly opposite, join into one – to strengthen the core and give it stable inner grounding. There are times when a person needs to stand tall, to feel strength and build an inner pillar; and there are times to bend, to release, and to let nature itself act, allowing the core to gather into its depth and grow stronger in quietness.

In these two approaches together – the upright and the bent – lies the essence of the core: not one single quality, but both the power to exert and stand firm, and the power to relax and fold inward. In each way, when practiced with

calmness and intention, the core is revealed more deeply, and a new strength arises within.

Final Gate – The Core as an Inner Gateway to Body and Soul

From the first cry of the newborn to the last years of old age, one truth runs through all of life: the human being is carried by the strength of the core.

We have seen how the infant, in crying, rolling, crawling, and walking, unknowingly trains the deep belt of muscles. We have seen how childhood play, youthful growth, adult work, and even rest in old age all depend on the same hidden center. Every stage of life is marked by the work of the core.

We have also seen how the core is more than posture or strength. It shapes appetite,

digestion, and breath. It calms the nervous system and steadies the heart. It teaches patience, balance, and self-mastery. It is the bridge between body and soul — a physical act that becomes a spiritual lesson.

Science speaks of nerves, diaphragms, and interoception. Simple life speaks of hunger, calm, and strength. Both are describing the same gate. The core is the place where knowledge and experience meet, where body and soul join, where the hidden becomes felt.

In the end, the message is simple: the core is small, but it carries everything. It is the inner gateway through which health and balance flow. Whoever learns to gather it discovers not only strength of body, but also peace of spirit.

The journey of this book is therefore an invitation — to live with awareness of the center, to guard it, to train it, to let it steady

every part of life. For in the quiet act of drawing the midsection inward, a person discovers the greatest secret: the wholeness of body and soul as one.

Afterword

Every book must end, but the journey of the core does not. It is not a matter to be studied once and put aside, but a living practice that continues with every breath.

The core is quiet. It does not shout for attention like the outer muscles of the body. It works in silence, hidden, steady. Yet from this silence flows balance for the whole of life. Whoever tends to the core discovers that strength is not only in effort, but in calm gathering.

This book has shown the path: from the infant's cry to the elder's steady breath, from appetite to patience, from shallow restlessness to deep calm. But the true lesson is not in these pages. It is in your own body. Each reader must discover, through practice, what it means to draw the midsection inward and feel the change that follows.

Do not think of the core as a task apart from life. It is life itself — in sitting, in standing, in walking, in prayer, in sleep. Each moment offers the chance to return to the center, to be gathered, to be whole.

If this book has given you even a glimpse of that wholeness — the joining of body and soul in one calm act — then its purpose is fulfilled. May the core become for you not only strength of body, but a quiet gateway to peace of spirit.

Practical Manual – Midline Crossing Exercises

What It Means to Cross the Midline

Crossing the midline refers to movements where a hand, foot, or limb crosses the invisible line dividing the body into right and left. Though simple in appearance, these exercises build the core and train the body and brain to work as a unified whole.

The Scientific Foundation

- **Brain Integration**: Crossing the midline strengthens the *corpus callosum*, the band of fibers connecting the right and left hemispheres of the brain. This helps the two sides work together in smooth coordination.
- **Core Stability**: Therapists describe the core as the body's *axis* or *pillar*. When

the core is weak, crossing is clumsy; when strong, crossing flows with ease.

- **Learning and Focus**: These exercises support reading, writing, and problem solving, because they demand cooperation between both hemispheres.

Common Midline Crossing Exercises

1. **Cross Crawl** – Touch the right hand to the left knee, then left hand to the right knee.
2. **Lazy 8s / Figure Eight** – Draw the infinity sign (∞) in the air with one or both hands; sometimes called *Double Doodle* when done with both hands at once.
3. **Windmills** – With feet apart, reach the right hand to the left foot, then left hand to the right foot.

4. **Cross Touch** – Bring the right elbow toward the left knee, then switch sides.
5. **Arm Swings** – Swing both arms side to side across the body, passing the midline each time.
6. **Side-to-Side Twist** – Rotate the upper body from side to side so the arms cross the midline repeatedly.
7. **Cross-Body Claps** – Clap hands in an X-shape across the body, both above and below.
8. **Double Arm Circles** – Move both arms in large circles, like swimming strokes, with each hand crossing the midline.

These movements are widely used in *Brain Gym* and *Brain Integration* programs, as well as in occupational therapy and education.

Practical Guidance

- **Start Slowly**: Begin with simple movements like Cross Crawl or Arm Swings.
- **Engage the Core**: Each crossing should come from a stable midsection and back, not from loose or sagging posture.
- **Balance Both Sides**: Perform an equal number of repetitions with right crossing left and left crossing right.
- **Adapt by Age**: For children, keep the motions playful; for adults, focus on stability and rhythm.

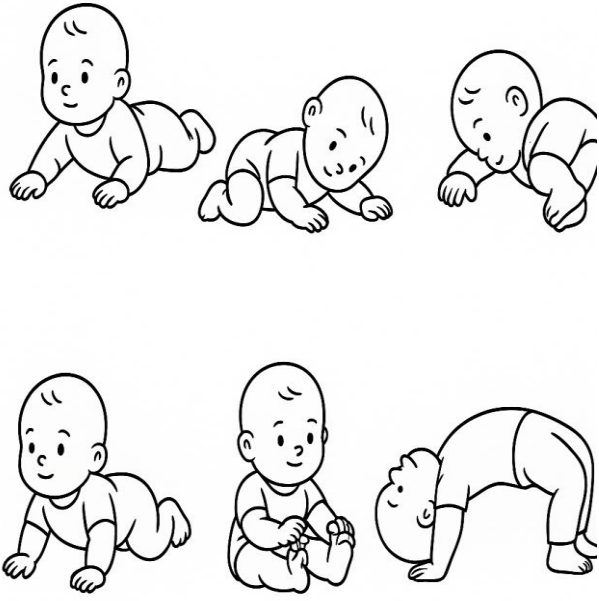
The Inner Image of Circles

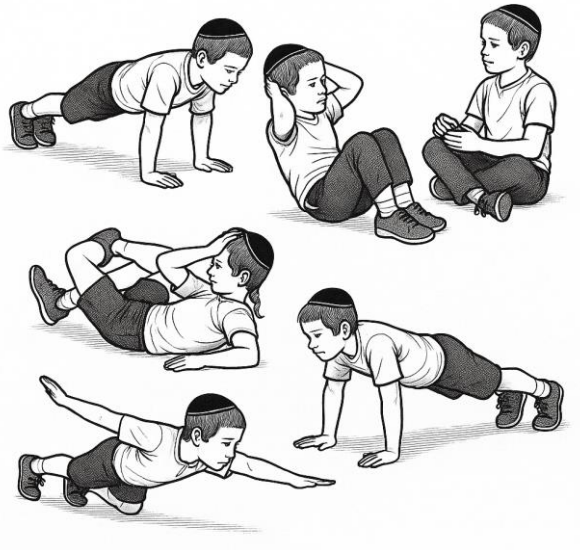
Beyond science, one can sense a deeper image: the core is like a point at the center of many circles. When a person crosses the midline, the arms and legs do not only pass the center; they cut through the surrounding circles as well. The wider the reach, the more

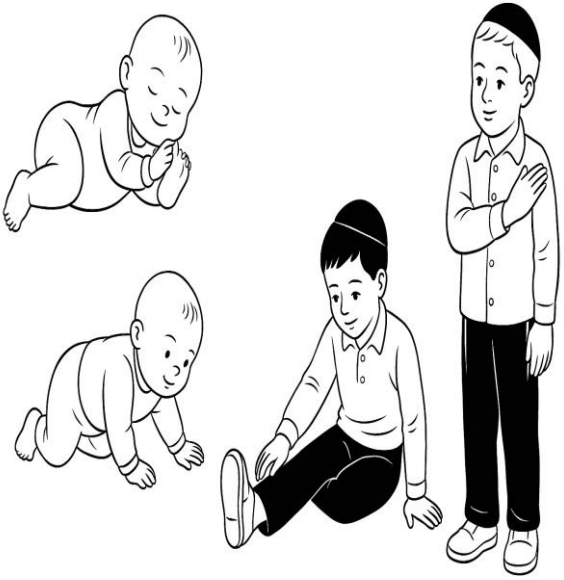
circles are crossed — from the smallest close to the core, to the largest far away.

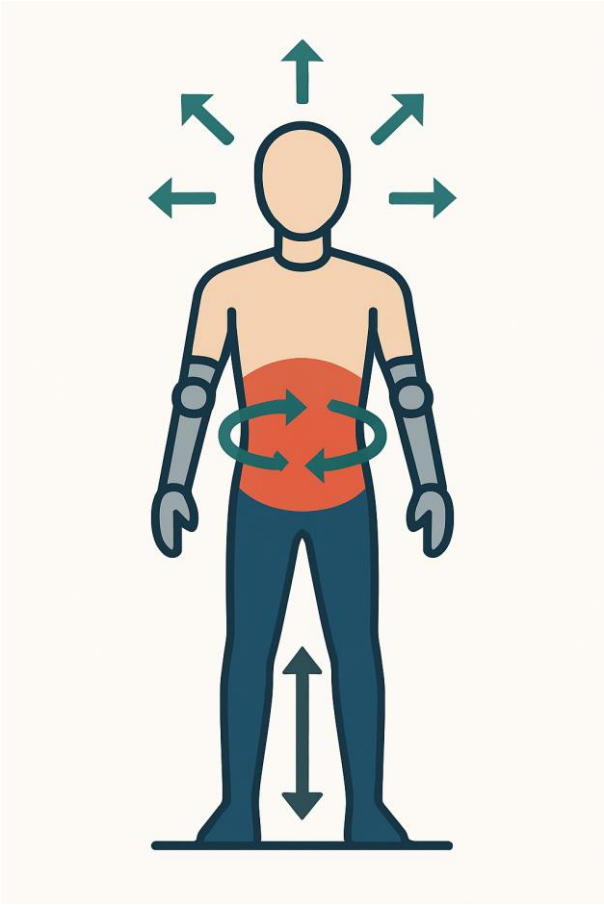
The Lesson

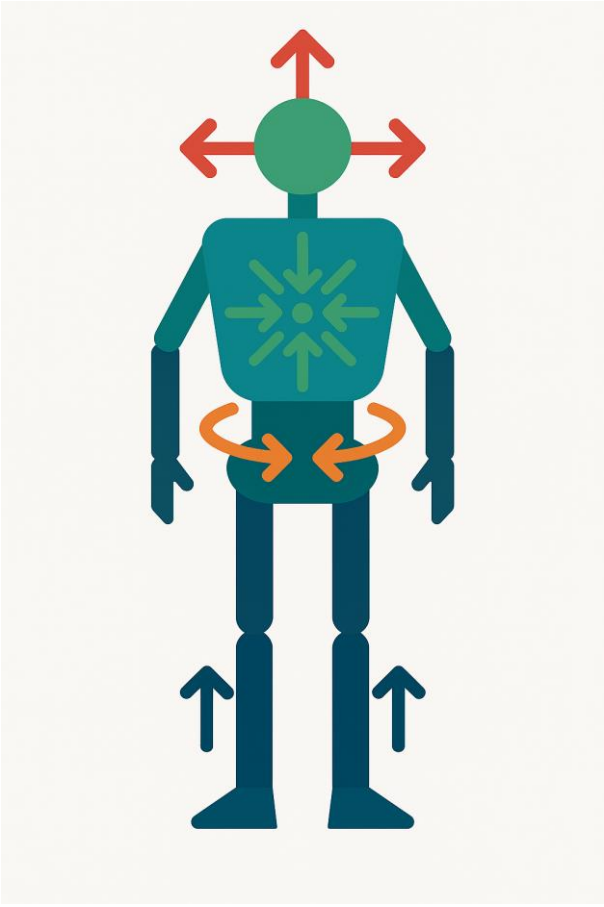
From the scientific side, midline crossing unites the brain's two hemispheres and strengthens balance and focus. From the inner side, each crossing connects the point within to the circles without. Together they reveal the same truth: the core is the axis, the center from which unity and stability flow.



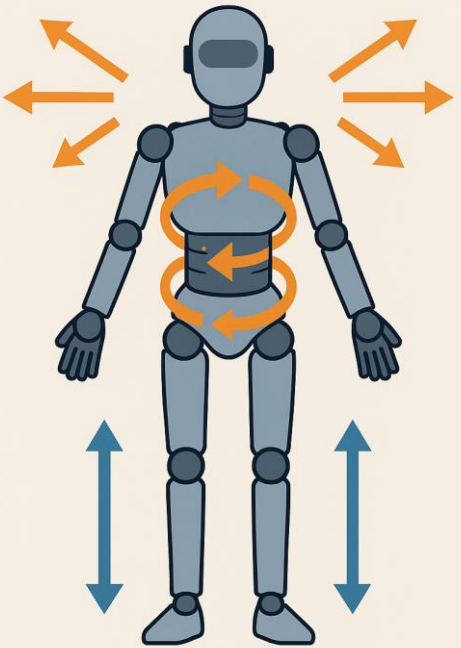








Upper Body Movement



Lower Body Stability